Tuesday, September 9, 2008 ★ 6 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 276 P10 www.inquirer.net

KILLER SLIDE Rescuers and villagers dig through the mud and rubble of a landslide in Placo town in Compostela Valley, on Sunday. Heavy rains triggered two landslides in the area over the weekend, leaving 16 dead and 14 missing. AFP

Fighting resumes in South

Mom saved 4 kids before deadly slide hit her house

By Frinston Lim
Inquirer Mindanao
and Nikko Dizon in Manila

MAGU, COMPOSTELA VALley—Rosemarie Mosquera was with her children when she noticed the ground shake under the floor of her house.

Sensing danger, she gathered her children and ran out of their house, when the rumbling became louder.

"We were very frightened," the mother of four said. "We were not able to bring anything, just the clothes we were wearing."

Mosquera and her family were among those who escaped the landslides that hit the mining village of Masara on Saturday and Sunday.

As of 4 p.m. on Monday, police and social worker officials said 16 had died and 14 remained missing.

MOSQUERA'S KIN

A GROUP of villagers gathers by the roadside on the way to an evacuation center in Talayan town, Maguindanao, to avoid being caught in the crossfire between government troops and Moro rebels in this photo taken on Aug. 29. The mass evacuation prompted the Red Cross to appeal for funding to help more than 500,000 people affected by the fighting. AFP

Red Cross airs appeal for funds

THE INTERNATIONAL COMmittee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is issuing an appeal for funds to help tens of thousands of people displaced by the recent fighting in Mindanao between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The conflict has "generated very serious humanitarian consequences," with many people needing help since they fled their homes with clothing, said Dominik Stillhart, deputy director of the Geneva-based ICRC.

"We kind of have the impression that we need to be prepared for more hardship, more suffering," Stillhart told the Foreign Correspondents Association.

RED CROSS A7

AFP air, ground forces attack Moro rebels

By Jeoffrey Maitem and Edwin O. Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

KORONADAL—FIGHTING RESUMED YESTERday after a weeklong lull with the military mounting ground and air assaults against a band of guerrillas of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Datu Piang in Maguindanao, military officials said.

At least six civilians, including two children and a pregnant teenager, were killed in the clash at Barangay Tee, said MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu. Those killed were fleeing aboard a motorboat that was hit by a rocket from a helicopter gunship, said Bhoils Tan, municipal administrator in the MILF-controlled town.

Kabalu identified the fatalities as Daya and Vilma, both surnamed Mutanggal, 16-year-old newlywed and pregnant Aida, Kira, 7; Ashara, 7; and Reina, all surnamed Manali. Two others, identified as Cabarodin, 16, and Ibalya, 13, both surnamed Manali, were wounded.

"There has been no fighting in Datu Piang since yesterday. What happened was that the military launched air strikes. There are many soldiers right

FIGHTING A11

Bomb explodes near market; another defused

COTABATO CITY—AN IMPROvised device exploded near the public market in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, before dawn yesterday but no casualties were reported, the military said.

"Apparently, the bomb was timed to explode when people are busy going to the market," said Col. Marlou Salazar, chief of the 601st Infantry Brigade. However, the bomb went off prematurely, he said. There were only a few people around at the time of the blast.

Another homemade bomb was defused in front of a bakery near the Tacurong City public market.

The devices were fashioned from 81mm mortar shells with mobile phones as trigger mechanisms and "bore the signature

BOMB A11

Secret of success is gambling, House told

By Christine V. Esguerra

BUILD A GAMBLING COMPLEX and investors will come.

This was the formula that Trade Secretary Peter Favila was trying to sell yesterday in the House of Representatives at the hearing on his department's proposed P2.85-billion budget for 2009.

Favila made a subtle endorsement of plans to set up a Las Vegas-style gambling complex in the country, arguing that Singapore and Malaysia attracted more foreign investments primarily through "entertainment and private gaming."

"Maybe this is something that we can take a look at," he told the lawmakers. "I know the sensibilities of certain sectors. I know the sensibilities of the Church, but we might be missing [on the opportunity here.]"

Favila said the Philippines

SECRET A7

McCain surges past Obama by 4 points in latest poll

WASHINGTON—REPUBLIcan John McCain heads into the final stretch of the US presidential campaign with a 4-point lead over Democrat Barack Obama, a USA Today/Gallup poll released on Sunday showed.

The lead was McCain's biggest since January and a turnaround from a USA Today poll taken just before last week's Republican Party convention opened, when the veteran Arizona senator and decorated war hero trailed Obama by 7

MCCAIN/OBAMA A6

ON TOP OF THE WORLD Republican presidential candidate John McCain and running mate Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin board the campaign airplane in Albuquerque, New Mexico, en route to Kansas City on Sunday. AP

Cindy outfit, $300,000; Michelle's dress, $150

NEW YORK—CINDY MCCAIN OF Michelle Obama for the White House?

Among fashionistas, the wives of the Republican and Democratic presidential

CINDY OUTFIT A6

Antigraft academy rises in RP

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WHEN PEOPLE DO THEIR LAUNDRY, some may just want to start with the dirtiest clothes.

With that in mind, antigraft experts from Asia have decided to launch an anticorruption center in the Philippines—one of the countries in the world where corruption is said to be most pervasive—that would train and educate civil servants and others to the virtues of plain, honest work.

"We are not picking on the Philippines ... We acknowledge that there are prob-

ANTIGRAFT A6

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Small players make big bucks, too

Still, solon welcomes little competition they give Big 3 oil firms

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE SMALL OIL PLAYERS ARE NO SLOUCHES either when it comes to turning a profit at a time of soaring fuel prices.

An administration congressman—who had earlier sought a probe of the big oil companies for their seemingly high profits—yesterday called attention to the similarly huge earnings of oil firms other than the "Big 3."

Citing Securities and Exchange Commission records, Cebu Rep. Edsel Lagman said Shell, Philippine Geo, made a net profit of P334.79 million in 2005—a "huge reversal" from the company's P298.14 net loss the year before.

In a press statement, Lagman said Petroil Philippines Inc. registered a net profit of P121.4 million for the same period, a 229 percent increase over its 2004 earnings of P36.84 million.

Mindanao-based Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc. had a net income of P222.36 million last year, representing a 65-percent increase over its 2004 earnings of P134.96 million.

Lagman said the three companies, unlike the big oil companies, have not been charged with "profiteering" or "overpricing" despite their huge earnings.

"The small players are no slouches either when it comes to turning a profit at a time of soaring fuel prices," he said.

Lagman's statement came on the heels of the filing of a resolution by Rep. Teodoro Casiño of Bayan Muna calling for a congressional investigation into the "obscene profits" of the oil companies.

Casiño's resolution, which was referred to the committee on energy, cited the huge profits of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Chevron Philippines Inc. in the first quarter of 2006.

Pilipinas Shell reported a net income of P3.2 billion for the first three months of the year, while Chevron's net income for the same period was P1.1 billion.

Lagman said the two companies' profits were "obscene" because they were "unconscionably disproportionate to the investments and risks undertaken by the companies."

Lagman said the Philippine National Oil Company-Exploration Corp. (PNOC-EC) also posted a net income of P1.1 billion in 2005, a "huge reversal" from the P1.2-billion net loss it suffered in 2004.

Lagman said PNOC-EC's net income in 2005 was "unconscionably disproportionate to the investments and risks undertaken by the company."

Lagman said the Philippine Geothermal Inc. Group, which is engaged in the development of geothermal energy, posted a net income of P1.1 billion in 2005, a 10-percent increase over its 2004 net income of P1 billion.

Lagman said the Philippine Geothermal Group's net income in 2005 was "unconscionably disproportionate to the investments and risks undertaken by the company."

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Same road paid for twice in '08 budget, says Lacson

SEN. PANFILO LACSON YESTERDAY accused Malacañang of padding a law case in Congress with double funding for the same P200-million road project in the South-ern Luzon Expressway in the 2008 national budget.

This emerged during the Senate hearing on the proposed 2009 national budget where a number of senators questioned the government's ability to sustain a P1.11-trillion outlay amid the economic slowdown.

Others would-be senators also cited project during the hearing. Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said it was a "congressional insertion."

Lacson said the senators were infuriated after discovering that one stretch of road was financed twice, the first time under the 2008 General Appropriations Act for Metro Manila projects. Then the same project—the President Carlos Garcia Avenue Extension from SLEX to Sucat worth P200 million—appeared under a different item, "construction of C-5 Road Extension from SLEX to Sucat Road" under the budget's "Urgent Infrastructure Including Local Projects."

"Filipinos will be double-dead if we this project. Probably all road name changes have led to double funding. This is an insult to the intelligence of Filipinos," said Lacson in an interview with reporters.

"President Gloria Arroyo-Macapagal and C-5 are one and the same. Who knows what Malacañang will use the extra P200 million for? What we are sure of is that it will end up in the pockets of some Palace official," Lacson said.

Lacson said that since Andaya had been reporting the wealth "good governance" at the hearing like it was Malacañang's new mantra, he should put it into action by filing charges against duplicate items in Congress and personally appropriated P200-million for a stretch of road between Parañaque City and the South Luzon Expressway "not once but twice."

Aside from the double funding for the C5 road, Lacson also questioned the sustainability of the proposed 2009 budget. Lacson said that while the government has claimed sound economic fundamentals, if put look closer, real growth has been driven more by government consumption than consumer expenditure.

"I don't think the 7.3-percent growth in GDP (gross domestic product) is miraculous because the government itself pushed the economic growth, if the government does not spend, the economy does not spend," he added.

But Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile endorsed that the government would be able to sustain the budget which a P1.005 billion higher than this year's budget after he was assured by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs that they could increase revenue collection.

Senate President Manuel Villar said the Senate would remain "fiercely independent" to make sure the budget would be free, public service oriented and beneficial to the poorest of the poor.

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Rice terraces lose development fund

By Norman Bordadora

THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM HAS put the development of the Ifugao rice terraces, a world heritage site, on the back burner. A P46-million proposal to develop a tourist village in the area was not included in their proposed 2009 budget.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano, asked to explain the deletion of the funds from viewers, said the DOT had proposed the purchase of 25 hectares of rice terraces for the tourist village but the proposal was thwarted down because it would take the department beyond its budget ceiling for next year.

Durano, in presenting the DOT's P1.3-billion budget proposal, told congressmen that many projects were not being funded because it was no longer economically viable for the farmers that owned them to do so.

"If we are to continue the effort to preserve the rice terraces as a heritage site, we have to compensate it as such," Durano told the House committee on appropriations yesterday.

Durano said the proposal was for the DOT and Department of Agriculture to jointly undertake the management of the rice terraces for tourism purposes. It calls for P100 million from the proposed DA budget and P46 million from the DOT's.

"We have a proposal for the guardians of 25 hectares (of the rice terraces)," Durano said.

"Unfortunately, it was not included in this proposed budget," he said.

Durano told the lawmakers later the Department of Budget and Management reassured the P46-million allocation to keep the DOT's budget within limits.

The ceiling man, not to DBM, he said.

Durano said he did not know the DBM retained the part to be shouldered by the DA. "I will discuss it with (Secretary Arthur Yap) at the Cabinet meeting tomorrow," Durano said.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) has included the rice terraces on its list of world heritage sites since 1995.

Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao raised the issue of the sensing majority of the rice terraces in view of the concerns for their maintenance.

After generations of inheritance, Ifugaites tend ownership of the terraces but can parcelled out to their children divide up the lots.

He said the smaller partitions of terraced land have resulted in inefficient production.

"Before, the eldest child got everything. Now, the children have gone to school and they want their share of the land," Chungalao said.

Chungalao asked the House budget panel to re-align funds for the rice terraces and pave the way for the DOT and DA's programs for a tourism village.

"I believe there is a need to restore the silvestrines," Chungalao said.

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GSIS, NBN-4 deal legal, says lawyer

THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE Insurance System (GSIS) said the agreement it entered into with Broadcast Enterprises Network Inc. (BEN) to offset the latter's P25.66-million life and retirement premium dues did not violate the Civil Code.

GSIS chief legal counsel Estrella Elamparo said there was nothing illegal about the memorandum of agreement the GSIS entered into with BEN which operates the National Broadcasting Network Channel 4, in 2002.

"Offsetting is a recognized mode of payment under the Civil Code and under our charter," Elamparo said in a statement.

Elamparo was reacting to the report that GSIS president Winston Garcia had a complaint with the Ombudsman, charging that the "exchange deal" forged by GSIS president Winston Garcia and the TV network was illegal.

According to Elamparo, the Civil Code describes payment as "not only the delivery of money but also the performance, in any other manner, of an obligation."

As part of its agreement with the GSIS to pay off its life and retirement premium dues, BEN agreed to broadcast "GSIS Members' Hour," over NBN-4 every Friday night.

The GSIS also shows, which aimed to enlighten the public on current concerns affecting the state pension fund, are included the Arab TV Seal in 2005 and 2007 by the Southeast Asia Foundation for Children and Television (SEAFCTV).

The programs aired for 2004 until early 2008, when it was replaced by infomercials also about the different programs and policies of the GSIS.

On another graft charge filed by other teachers last week who claimed that the GSIS transferred funds to the "personal account" of the GSIS treasurer, Elamparo said, "That's not true at all."

She said the "money was deposited in the trust account of the GSIS with the treasurer as signatory."

Elamparo said the graft complainants were motivated by harassment against Garcia, who has challenged the Lopez family for control of Manila Electric Co.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, September 9, 2008
23rd Week in Ordinary Time
Peter Claver

1st Reading: 1 Cor 6:1-11
Gospel: Lk 6:12-19

Jesus went out into the hills to pray, spending the whole night in prayer with God. When day came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them whom he named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James son of Alphaeus and Simon, called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who would be the traitor.

Coming down the hill with them, Jesus stood on a level place. Many of his disciples were there and a large crowd of people who had come from all parts of Judea and Jerusalem and from the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon. They gathered to hear him and be healed of their diseases; likewise people troubled by evil spirits were healed. All the crowd tried to touch him because of the power which never ran from him and healed them all.

Commentary:

The careful reader will notice that the apostles are listed in pairs. The apostles do not stand in isolation, but in solidarity with one another. They will be sent out into the world in pairs to proclaim the Kingdom and establish the Church.

We live out our faith in communion with the Church. Often we find that we can do so much better to serve the Lord when we form a partner or are part of a group. "Many hands make light work," built in the wonderful ability to share the building up of the Kingdom of God.

'Marce' heads for northern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—THE ACTIVE LOW PRESSure area spotted east of Guam/Saipan in the West region Monday morning had become a tropical depression by noon, the **weather bureau said yesterday.**

Tropical depression "Marce" gathered strength yesterday afternoon as it moved toward northern Luzon.

At 4 p.m., the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration spotted the storm 415 kilometers east of Casiguran, Aurora, with maximum sustained winds of 65 kph near the center and gustiness of 80 kph.

Public storm signal No. 2 was hoisted over Cagayan, Isabela and northern Aurora.

Signal No. 1 was raised in Catanduanes, Polillo Island, Quirino and the rest of Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Benguet, Ifugao, Mt. Province, Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, Abra, Kalinga, Apayao, and the Babuyan and Batanes group of islands.

The storm is expected to be 330 kilometers northeast of Casiguran this afternoon and 120 kilometers of Vigan, Ilocos Sur, by Wednesday.

Earlier, Pagasa said it located Marce 240 kilometers northeast of Virac, Catanduanes, with maximum sustained winds of 55 km per hour.

Marce is expected to bring rains over Southern Luzon and the Visayas as it continues the southwest movement.

Pagasa's early Monday forecast said the rest of the country was expected to experience partly cloudy weather with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms in the afternoon and evening.

Coastal waters across the country would be slight to moderately choppy, but would be stronger in the presence of thunderstorms, the bulletin said.

Disaster coordinating councils in the affected areas were advised to make the necessary preparations. Jocelyn R. Uy, Agence France-Presse/Inquirer Southern Luzon

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GOOD NEWS FOR THE CONSUMER: THE WORST WILL SOON BE OVER.

In the past 18 months up to June this year, prices of basic commodities like oil, rice, wheat, sugar, corn, and sardines, rose to their highest in 35 years, worldwide, including the Philippines.

The **Consumer and Oil Price Watch** believes that the worst will soon be over. The **Philippines is over the hump**.

Take OIL: Crude oil hit a record $147.27 per barrel on July 11, 2008 in New York. The expectation was that the price would climb further to $150, and then to as high as $200 later this year.

Instead, **oil is now on a downward spiral, crashing below $105 a barrel on Sept. 5.** That's a drop of 29 percent from its peak.

Take RICE: Thai rice hit a record $1,080 per ton in April this year. On August 18, Thai rice crashed in price by $380 to $700, a drop of 35 percent. **Vietnam**, another major rice exporter, **cut its price to $800 a ton,** a drop of 8 percent. **There is now an oversupply of rice in the world market.**

Take INFLATION: Inflation rose to 12.5 percent, its highest in 17 years. In the future, the rise in consumer prices may not climb faster than that. **Inflation should moderate in the last three months of 2008 and should return to single digit in the first half of 2009.**

Food represents 55 percent of a poor man's consumer spending. Fuel, light and water, where oil is represented, takes up another 7 percent. **Since food and oil prices have dropped dramatically, the rise in prices, as measured by inflation, will slow down dramatically.**

ACCORDINGLY, COPW SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING:

- ***That the Department of Agriculture establish a Medium Term Food Policy to reduce heavy reliance on imported food. This must consider the following:***

- **RICE & CORN:** Encourage farmers to produce and **import only when we expect shortages**.
- We have a **buffer stock** of **imported rice** to meet our requirements up to the **first quarter of 2009** and we do not have to **import**.
- **NFA** must determine the **current inventory & incoming shipments of imported rice** which will be the basis whether there is a **need** to import.
- **COPW will present to the Department of Agriculture, NFA, DSWD, the concerns of the farmers for a price support for palay.**

- ***On oil pricing, the COPW welcomes the move of DOE Secretary Reyes To invite Shell & Petron and the New Players on september 8 - to address the need for transparency in oil pricing.***

1. The price Of Dubai Crude used by the OIL Refineries Petron & Shell **dropped from a record level of $147 to a record low of $101.71 on September 5 or $45.29 per barrel.**
2. On the other hand, the **New Players** who import finished products based on MOPS Singapore showed **a drop in diesel of $8.03 as of Sept. 3 price of $127.23 compared to the August price of $135.26 per barrel.**
3. **Unleaded gasoline showed a drop of $4.27 as of Sept. 5 price of $111.22 compared to the August price of $115.49 per barrel.**
4. The OPEC Countries will meet on Sept. 9 and have indicated they, led by **Saudi Arabia, Iran & Venezuela**, **will cut output of crude to maintain the price of $100 per barrel** as there is an oversupply in the market due to speculation & geopolitics.

AGREEMENT WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS:

In July and August, Energy Secretary Reyes convened two meetings with the Stakeholders, namely, the - Oil Companies, Transport Sector, DOTC, LTFRB, Industry Sector, IBON Foundation and the COPW, representing the Consumers. The following were agreed upon:

- **Weekly the NEW Players shall announce their moving four-week Oil Price Increase or Rollback** based on their 30 days inventory, while **PETRON & SHELL will do likewise based on their moving six to 8 weeks of inventory.**
- DOE-DOJ Circular dated August 11, 2005 requires **24 hours notice from the Oil Companies for any Price Increase or Price Reduction.**

- ***Price of Power will go down starting the First Quarter of 2009 for the following reasons:***

1. **Open Access will be available** to all residential homes, medium size business & factories, **consuming 200Kwh & above monthly.**
2. They will be allowed to pool or aggregate their purchase of power and **buy from the most competitive Power Producer directly** under the **"Consumer Choice" Program**.
3. **Today Open Access is limited to those consuming 1 MEGA Watt of POWER** which are large industrial plants, call centers, hotels, shopping malls, & high rise condominiums.

   - Under RA 9163 Espra Law, **Open Access should have taken effect four years ago.**
   - Under RA 7832 the **Anti-Electricity & Transmission line, Pilferage Act of 1994 should have taken effect 13 years ago. The Consumer is being penalized by the System Losses, due to the inefficiency of the Distribution Utilities.**

- ***Meanwhile, COPW is requesting DTI Secretary Peter Favila to convene a meeting of the National Price Coordinating Council – NPCC in early October to ensure that prices of basic commodities remain stable in the light of the approaching Christmas season.***

RAUL T. CONCEPCION
Chairman

For online posting of COPW issues, log on to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/COPW/
Text 0917-8503363 if you agree or have any comments on the COPW position. Thank you.

Missing soldier's body found in shallow grave

By Nikko Dizon

THE BODY OF ARMY SGT. ROGER EMBOK, a Philippine counselor observer believed to have been executed by guerrillas of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, was unearthed yesterday from a shallow grave in Maguindanao, a military official said.

Embok's grave was found by soldiers from the 64th Infantry Battalion in a marshy area behind Barangay Sibaliw in Guindulungan town, with the help of Embok's companions who were able to escape from their MILF captors, said Col. Medres Solaiman, commander of the 602nd Brigade based in Maguindanao.

Solaiman told reporters at Camp Aguinaldo by phone that the soldiers who dug up Embok's decomposing body said that his hands were tied and he appeared to have been tortured before he was shot dead.

"I was told that his eyes were gouged out and his teeth were removed, but I am still hoping that report was false," Solaiman said.

Embok, whose body was flown to Cotabato City for autopsy, was a member of the 64th IB and was detailed as a ceasefire observer in the GRP-MILF joint monitoring action teams.

He was reported to have been abducted by MILF guerrillas along with two other civilians last month in Barangay Salucuddo in Datu Piang, Maguindanao.

Solaiman said the body of Embok's other companions had been discovered earlier in a shallow grave.

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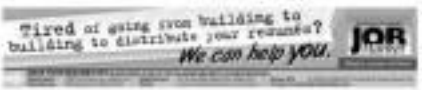

PILOT

Red Cross airs appeal for funds

From page B1

tions of the Philippines after a visit to the country's areas of displacement.

Stillhart said the ICRC would later air its appeal for more funds to provide relief and for up to 80,000 people in 16 countries. The agency's yearly budget of $7 million for the Philippines had been enhanced due to the conflict.

"This budget extension appeal is mainly to cover the cost of relief items that we are going to distribute" and to send additional personnel to the area, said Stillhart.

He said that the ICRC had asked the government and the MILF to allow its workers access to displaced civilians, many of them sheltering in evacuation camps.

DOMINIC Stillhart, deputy director of the International Committee of the Red Cross, asks the military and Moro rebels not to stop aid boats reaching civilians displaced by fighting in Mindanao, during a press conference in Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao on Saturday. AFP

Attacks on civilians

The ICRC is particularly concerned about attacks on civilians, said Stillhart, and volunteers are attempting to document these incidents.

He said that many areas remain beyond the reach of aid workers and urged both sides to respect international humanitarian law and guarantee access.

ICRC, along with other humanitarian organizations and UN agencies, issues appeals for funding to the international community to support assistance programs to people in distress in many hotspots inland and strife-ridden countries.

The National Disaster Coordinating Center has said that the scrambling clashes in Mindanao have "affected" nearly 300,000 people who either lost their homes or their livelihoods. AFP

Secret of success is gambling, House told

From page B1

pulsed in comparison with Singapore and Malaysia in terms of foreign direct investments last year.

While the Philippines registered only around $2 billion, its new neighbors attracted between $8 million and $10 million.

Avila said the disparity is inconsistent could be attributed to the core committee decision to open their respective countries to "new paradigm activity which is now more popularly referred to as entertainment and private gaming."

Integrated city

He explained a similar vision for the Philippines although the Arroyo administration had already begun an ambitious $15-billion gambling complex project called the "Bagong Nayong Pilipino-Manila Bay Integrated City."

He recalled last April, the project is a version of the failed $26-billion "Pagcor Entertainment City."

Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) remembered with the casino project despite strong opposition from the Catholic Church, whose leaders were battling the plan on moral grounds.

Bishops at groundbreaking

The state gambling agency apparently tried to woo Church support during groundbreaking rites by inviting three retired Philippine Catholic bishops to the affair.

One of those who showed up, Cubbaying Bishop Primitivo Mascariñas Cruz, was quoted as saying then that "the Church will not oppose any new project as long as it has the blessing of the Lord."

The resurrected Pagcor project angered Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, a leading voice against gambling, both legal and illegal.

"The Philippine government is the official gambling lord...a living reality that makes all upright and decent Filipinos well-low in disgust and shame," Cruz wrote in his blog in reaction to the project.

"To promote gambling for charity and humanitarian purposes, to build a $10-billion gambling city for the progress and development of the country ... are but signs of desperation to deodorize and sanitize the downright vice of gambling—which the present administration set its own all leaning," he said.

In a separate blog entry, the prelate admitted the very concept of "casinos," saying these amusement only "the greedy overdoses, the dubious characters and menacing individuals."

"These official gambling houses do not only serve to those who crave for the money of everybody else, but in effect provide for the making of gambling addicts, for their consumption of different orders to ruin their vice of gambling—to the extent of doing away with their own families," Cruz said.

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IN THE KNOW

P1.2 trillion lost to graft

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN, which investigates and prosecutes graft cases against public servants, received 7,720 new cases in 2007, the year Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed the presidency.

The number of new cases increased in the following years: 9,267 in 2002 and 9,318 in 2003.

Statistics for the succeeding years were not available.

Based on the latest available statistics, the total workload of administrative and criminal cases added up to 16,050 in 2003. Of these, 7,382 were disposed of, leaving 8,728 cases pending by the end of 2003.

In a news release in June 2006, the Office of the Ombudsman said: "Over the last five years, the government lost P1.2 trillion to graft. The Department of Budget and Management estimated that P21 billion was lost to graft to the proximate cost of locally funded projects alone. PDI Research

Antigraft academy rises in RP

From page A1

lems here but this is a good place to start," Prof. Charles Campbell of the Institute of Ethics, Governance and Law and of Griffith University in Australia said in a recent interview.

"It's just like doing the laundry. Should you start with the cleanest clothes or the dirtiest? The most important thing is the Philippines wants to improve."

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez described the signing of a memorandum of understanding paving the way for the establishment of a Center for Asian Integrity (CAI) in the Philippines.

The two other signatories were Ramaphool and Prof. Alex Brillantes, dean of the University of the Philippines National College of Public Administration and Governance.

The signing occurred during a multinational meeting in Manila of ombudsmen from seven countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Decaying values

Described as a "virtual academy," the CAI would offer courses and training aimed at reforming bureaucracy vulnerable to corruption and other sores in the decaying values of public officials.

It is being touted as the first anticorruption center in Asia and organizers hope it would mark wonders in the Philippines.

Based on the annual Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International released last year, the Philippines—ranks a 2.5 rating—came 131st out of the 180 nations that were studied.

The Philippines is classed with Iran, Libya, Nepal, Yemen, Burundi and Honduras.

The "cleanest" countries, with a rating of 9.4, are Denmark, Finland and New Zealand, which scored the study.

Gutierrez herself scored low in a 2007 survey on public satisfaction conducted by the Social Weather Stations, with a net rating of (+)21. The SWS said the was among those in government who got "roughly neutral" public satisfaction ratings.

Vulnerable to corruption

The center will be involved in research and education centering on the most current of public services and the systems that allow them to engage in shady dealings, Gutierrez told the business.

"Corruption may be so subdued in the officials not having the values and the proper knowledge about their duties," Gutierrez said.

"One system also makes it possible for officials to commit corruption. There is too much discretion given to them that they have the power to decide for an agency or department," she added.

The center will try to make it difficult for public officials to abuse their powers, Gutierrez said.

RP's cutting edge

The center is to be funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation-Philippines Threshold Program through the Asia Foundation. It will be based both at the Office of the Ombudsman and the University of the Philippines.

Ramaphool was heavily involved in anticorruption in Asean countries. He helped the German-based antigraft watchdog, Transparency International, to develop and promote the concept of "national integrity systems" to deal with corruption.

Socioeconomics specialist Dr. Gabriel C. Quinsaat, who served a three-year term as political counselor from the University of Queensland, Australia, said that compared to other countries plagued with corruption, the Philippines has "cutting edge" anti-graft mechanisms that would complement the center.

These include the system of lifestyle checks and the monitoring of the assessment of assets and liabilities and net worth of civil servants, Quinsaat said.

The antigraft experts said the Office of the Ombudsman have agreed to incorporate in the CAI a research program that will examine corruption vulnerability within a government system and come up with mechanisms to improve it.

An improvement in the anti-graft experts mean enhancing the system so that government officials would have no elbow room to promote their personal interests.

Name of the game

Ramphool and research was important in reforming the government because "corruption is a knowledge-based industry."

He also said that battling corruption "is not just a matter of writing laws, but getting the right laws and getting the right ethical standards, improving the mechanisms in prosecuting."

"The main game is to introduce public institutions so that the interest of the civil servants is to further the public good.

Supplementing the research are UP-accredited "integrity courses" which will be offered to public servants and integrated to the curriculum of partner schools nationwide.

Ramphool said the center would train civil servants to do their jobs better—"what is to be a good prosecutor, good judge, manager, engineer, etc."

They will be so efficiently trained that in the long run, the country should see fewer government officials failed to execute the graft and corruption, he said.

"Governance reform is not just about a good policy or a good institution. You need people to build the system," Ramphool stressed.

McCain surges past Obama in latest poll

From page A1

percentage points.

McCain's rise was expected, since candidates almost always receive a bounce in the polls after their conventions.

The new poll, taken Friday through Sunday, showed McCain leading Obama, a first-term senator from Illinois, by 50 percent to 46 percent, a reversal of views with less than two months before the Nov. 4 election.

The poll of 1,022 adults had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 points.

USA Today said McCain got a significant boost from the Republican National Convention in which Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin in his vice presidential running mate.

McCain also narrowed Obama's wide advantage on handling the economy, the top issue in the campaign, the newspaper said.

Major test for Palin

Palin, a social conservative who opposes abortion even in case of rape or incest, electrified the party's base at last week's Republican convention with a dramatic, sleek, big-speech that took on Obama.

But she still faces a major test this week when she gives her first nationally televised interview since McCain chose her as his running mate, instantly elevating the little-known politician to national status.

McCain said Sunday he would bring Democrats into his Cabinet and solicit their advice as part of his attempt to change the political atmosphere in Washington.

"I don't know how many but I can tell you, with all due respect to previous administrations, it is not going to be a single, 'Well, we have a Democrat now,'" McCain said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

"It's going to be the best people in America, the smartest people in America," he said.

Maverick, sidekick

There was no love loss from Obama's campaign.

"Starting with George Bush 90 percent of the time isn't being a maverick. It's being the President's sidekick," said Obama campaign spokesperson Bill Burton, referring to McCain.

Obama, 47, has been running on the change theme for more than a year and a half while McCain, 72, has come to it more recently after nearly campaigning on his experience.

Obama, in an interview on ABC's "This Week," said McCain spoke of reducing the cancer in Washington but the Republican convention last week was a highly partisan affair.

"How can campaign I think foreshadows how you're going to govern," Obama said.

With 56 days until the election, the two candidates took a rare day off on Sunday before plunging back into the fray.

Media pit-a-thon

Since he accepted the Republican presidential nomination, McCain has been campaigning with Palin and smearing Obama in a media pit-a-thon.

Before she was elected governor, Palin had been the mayor of Wasilla, Alaska, with a populous of less than 10,000 people.

Palin has not been questioned by the media since McCain made her his surprise pick for No. 2.

McCain campaign manager Rob Deen earlier complained that the media had focused too much on Palin's personal life. Many of those stories came after McCain's campaign announced that Palin's unwed 17-year-old daughter was pregnant.

"Why would we want to throw family Palin into a cycle of pleasure called the news media that have nothing better to ask questions about than her personal life and her children?" Davis said.

The Democrats have had a hard time targeting Palin, who has garnered public sympathy.

Sen. Hillary Clinton, who narrowly lost the Democratic primary, has refused to criticize Palin even though the McCain campaign has actively targeted her disgruntled supporters.

Biden said Obama and former President Bill Clinton would meet for a three-sampling lunch this week in New York after months of rumor on the campaign trail.

They will meet in person on Thursday, the seventh anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States by al-Qaida, at Clinton's foundation headquarters in Harlem, the aides said.

Clinton is said to have been fuming at his wife Hillary's defeat by Obama in the race for the Democratic nomination, but seems along way to burying the hatchet with a barnstorming speech at the party's recent convention. *Reports from Reuters, AP and AFP*

THE REPUBLICAN presidential candidate, Sen. John McCain, picks out hor hordes of cake and waits to pay for them at Sunday at El Pinto restaurant in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as his running mate, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, watches.

THE DEMOCRATIC presidential candidate, Sen. Barack Obama, speaks during a town meeting in Terre Haute, Indiana, on Saturday.

Cindy outfit, $300,000; Michelle's dress, $150

From page A1

candidates John McCain and Barack Obama are drawing the kind of enthusiasm that Nancy Reagan and Jacqueline Kennedy once attracted.

As might be expected, style mavens' critiques focus less on value (the personal Hope Lafley says she does not relish duty now).

While Obama won fire for wearing a relatively affordable $150 ($5,985) dress on a talk show, "The View," McCain drew attention for his expensive taste.

Newly-the magazine estimated one outfit she wore at the Republican National Convention this week was worth $300,000 ($11.9 million), broken down as follows:

Oscar de la Renta dress: $3,000 ($120,000); Chanel J12 White Ceramic Watch: $4,500 ($180,000); three-row diamond earrings: $200,000 ($11.9 million); Four strand pearl necklace: $11,000 ($20,000 ($11,000-$11 million); shoes, designer unknown: $600 ($17,000); total—between $300,000 and $323,300 ($11.9 million and $14.5 million).

The dealer a week ago of John McCain's running mate, Sarah Gov Sarah Palin, who made part to beauty pageants in her youth, has also caused a buzz, but Mickey Elias, director of savvy research at Baruch College, said her style could not be compared to McCain and Obama.

"There is sufficient local because you have to look a little bit more serious and professional," Blair said.

A sort of Jackie O

The consensus at New York Fashion Week is that both potential First Ladies have style that can be classed in the traditionally feminine-leaning industry would much rather have the chance to dress Obama over McCain.

"I am in the fashion industry. I live in New York—[to probably not going to go for McCain to dress," one fashion source broke.

"Michelle is really fresh and she could not of go where Jackie O went given the right sort of style and grooming," she said. "I think it could be nice for America to have somebody who's a little bit more stylish in their First Lady."

Deborah Orr, a Democrats and Harvard-educated lawyer who has appeared in Vogue and was included in Vanity Fair's 2008 International Best Dressed list for the second time.

Obama has won particular praise for a purple sheath dress and black-and-white set at a rally in June when her husband clinched the Democratic nomination as candidate for the Nov. 4 election.

"She has a kind of style which is accessible and also opens possibilities, it appeals to young girls and their grandmothers, it translates across class lines [and] racial lines," said Amy Fine Collins, special correspondent with Vanity Fair.

"Cindy McCain's look is over-under-familiar with, she's abundantly right and absolutely appropriate for the role she's in, but it doesn't feel new," she said. "She has expensive tastes and lots of a grab-it-and-go approach to clothes."

Always immaculate

McCain, 54, chairs her family's business, been disaffiliate Hensley and Co., and has worked for tower-national charities.

Images this week in Britain's The Guardian newspaper that McCain is "always immaculate, with never a hair out of place."

"But this morning her presentation is also her undoing. She doesn't know how to have fun with fashion," she said.

Designers and commentators note that Cindy favors tailored jacket-and-dress, while Obama tends to wear dresses.

Designer Michael Angeli said he would prefer to dress Obama and would create "the ultimate little skirt dress" for her to a print silk twill. for McCain, he could introduce a printed silk blouse for her to wear under one of her suits.

Rod Holgren, creative director at Lord Linen, said he would be happy dressing either woman.

Although they are different personalities—McCain being more western and Obama being compared to Kennedy—I feel like the common thread between them both is they have a classic sensibility to their clothing," Holgren said.

Polished vs accessible

If the style of Obama and McCain has fashionistas buzzing, their wives' sartorial choices are the campaign?

"I don't think anyone's going to win or lose based on what the wives are wearing," Blair said. "What it does is give a general impression of what the suite is like and maybe lunch."

Cindy McCain may have a look that's almost a little too polished and put together and her desires might look a bit too expensive and out of reach for the average person," Blair said.

Michelle Obama dresses in clothes that seem much more accessible to ordinary women and working moms."

Duct-taped glam

For Tim Gunn, style guru and mentor to the fledgling fashion designers on the television reality show "Project Runway," there is no reason.

"Michelle really epitomizes American style and she's not afraid to show her shape," he told New York Magazine.

"She's just an alluring woman, but I think her love and she's all licensed up, she's just sooo—she just looks like she's duct-taped!" Reuters

MICHELLE Obama (right) has won praise for a purple sheath dress and black belt she wore at a rally in June when her husband, Sen. Barack Obama clinched the Democratic nomination as presidential candidate for the Nov. 4 election.

CINDY McCain (left), wife of Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain, wears a $300,000 outfit, based on estimates made by Vanity Fair magazine, during the opening session of the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, on Sept. 1.

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OPINION

Pointers for fresh talks

EDITORIAL

MALACAÑANG ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK THE termination of peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the dissolution of the government panel of negotiators. President Macapagal-Arroyo, through Press Secretary Jesus Dureza, said her administration could not be forced to sign an agreement as an expanded Bangsamoro homeland as gangplank. At the same time, through Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, she held out hope that a new panel could be formed in the future and that the two sides could resume talks.

We believe that the Arroyo administration has learned a painful lesson from the botched Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain and hope that it will be better prepared for new talks in the future.

First, what is needed is a clear, written instruction from the President to the government panel on what it can negotiate with the MILF and what agreements it can sign. As the recent Supreme Court hearing on petitions against the proposed memorandum, Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera said the government panel had authority only to negotiate for the memorandum but had no authority to sign it. Push instructions for a prospective new panel should spell out clearly the extent of its mandate.

Second, the new panel should be headed by a diplomat who is experienced in international negotiations, not by a retired general who can be expected to bring his military mindset to the negotiating table. A diplomat is trained to bargain hard, but to do it in a tactful manner.

Third, the negotiators have to be backed by a strong panel of experts in constitutional and international law. Had the just disbanded panel of negotiators been backed by experts in constitutional and international law, we doubt if they would have agreed to the diminishment of the country and the grant of vast areas of national territory to the proposed Bangsamoro Juridical Entity, the creation of a separate territory form and the grant of the power to negotiate treaties to the BJE.

Parenthetically, we are glad that the President has agreed to give the Senate a direct hand in the drafting of a new peace agreement with the MILF. There are many constitutional and legal experts in the Senate, and they certainly could help in forging a good agreement.

Fourth, public hearings should be conducted on the main points of the proposed agreement, principally by Mindanao and in key cities of the country. All the stakeholders should be invited to these hearings so that the negotiating panel can hear various views and obtain various perspectives. In the case of the botched MOA-AD, it appears that no public hearings were conducted, and the first time people, including high-ranking government officials, heard about the proposed agreement was only a few days before it was scheduled to be signed.

Fifth, an extensive and continuing public information campaign has to be conducted on the proposed agreement to keep the people updated on the progress of the negotiations. In the case of the collapsed MOA, it appears that the administration was determined to keep the agreement secret and concealed from the people. Even senators and congressmen didn't know about the contents of the memorandum, and were furnished copies only after there was a hue and cry in the media and public forums. The leak-info was one of the few media exercises that were able to get a copy of the memorandum. Why keep a very important document, one on which both panels had agreed, secret and concealed from the people?

We are glad that the government has not entirely closed the door to new peace talks. Closing the door to peace talks could give the MILF the justification to continue to wage war against government forces. The entire nation, and not just Mindanao, has suffered enough from the continuing conflict between the MILF and government forces. Since 1997, the conflict has killed 120,000 people and displaced 2 million in the South. In the recent attacks by the MILF and the renegade units by the AFP about 280 people were killed and about half a million have been "displaced." Efforts to promote social and economic development in many areas in Mindanao, which are among the poorest and most disadvantaged in the country, cannot proceed in a climate of war.

The government has learned a painful lesson from the botched MOA-AD. We hope the government panel will get it right and do it right next time.

The missing fourth 'R'

VIEWPOINT

Joaquin L. Mercado

"MISS H. THE ONLY ANIMAL THAT BLUSH-es—or needs to," Mark Twain once said. And nowhere in Twain's canon doubted more than in President Macapagal-Arroyo's latest "crisis."

Malacañang officials don't blush as they wage what the hysterics tagged a "shameful and shameless" 3-R campaign: "Recount, Recall and Response" is the template he chats delve to oust the governor's 16th governor, Eddie Panlilio. "Why?

This priest turned television-commentator-turned-Malacañang's resolutely barnacled patrón of political invincibility. With skimpy funds and "losers cause people power," he trashed veteran Senator Ma. Mark Lapid and busted another Liberal Party. Both powers are the President's most revered allies. Panlilio denies that her husband is prey of the "farming" fetuses," i.e., Bangsaga.

"Among Ed" once handed the province's feisty tax collectorate, specially from its quarries. (Almost Pinatubo's eruption in 1991 shows up to 10 billion metric tons of lahar.) Within a month, he recorded the P29.1 million that took Governor Lapid all of 2006 to collect in the province he hijacked the politician's socio-economic cube. "Touch anything but our wallets."

Panlilio also drained the wallets of a corrupt elite by eliminating 100 "ghost" workers. (Here's the track record from provincial treasury data: Gov. Iron Icons (1995-1998—P5.62 million; over the next 12 years, Governors Lito Lapid and Mark Lapid collected P131.01 million. Panlilio doubled the Lapids' collection to P320 million—three times the Iron Icons.)

In booting Bangsaga's throne, Panlilio enabled citizens to glimpse the massive mess from their taxes that leached into private pockets.

The hits of robbery, however, tends to smash the linearity of reasons. Chief Justice Reynato Puno learned that when he led the Supreme Court to take dismissively on his recent one-woman levy. Marshal Dan Gozo even fed up to the Cojuangco unleashed the "first theft" to impeach Sereno. Influential, civic and church groups bore back Cojuangco's congressional gunslingers, but not before the country teetered on the brink of a constitutional crisis.

With a robust P140 million development fund, Panlilio helped raise shoddy district hospitals—including, alas, the Honorable Macapagal-Arroyo Provincial Hospital. He shunted, with scorn and harangues, the cupidity's P45 million spa-cum-recreation-fund and quarry revenues.

That's not a felony. But "few things are hard, et is just up with them the annoyance of a good example," Mark Twain noted. Worse, another raccoon "conspiracy" bellows.

And Panlilio did precisely that by spooking out. In October 2007, the President met Union of Local Authorities officials. Brown envelopes were handed out. Sure-finally-dammed-up. But Panlilio asked aloud: What was the P500,000 stuffed into his envelope for?

A human conspiracy erupted. Spinmasters cranked it: didn't need around "bribery." They skewered Panlilio for "indiscretion" as "legal ignorance," "since he turned the host over to the provincial treasurer. "So, one blushed," noted the Cebu Daily News. "Even more telling, no one returned to envelope."

"What will the rest of this archbishop of Canterbury backed the monarch's abuses. Henry's men cut Becket down in the altar. The story anchors T.S. Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral."

Ballistic officials, backed by 15 of Pampanga's 327 priests, would cut the province of this "troublesome priest." They've scrambled to grant themselves greater police power over gunships. But

Palin power

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AT THE RECENT 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION of Nicky Cuneta, Philatelic president and CEO Joey Cuneta's better half, which she turned into a mega-bigbid fund-raising benefit concert and art exhibit for three worthy causes, I was stunned to note that the topic at our table was the coming US elections. The creator of watercolor was Sarah Palin and here she energized the flagging campaign of Republican John McCain, who suffered in comparison to the charismatic Barack Obama with the youthful appeal. The 44-year-old Alaska governor and mother of five is being excited with much of the post-convention boosts that has enabled McCain to zoom ahead of Obama by 10 points (54-44) in the latest USA Today/Gallup poll. Says Nicky, "Sarah Power" is exploding in America is enhanced by the fourth rank among women they have heard of without eyeglasses. Op/Japanese designer Kasuo Kawasaki). This phenomenon attests to many conservative women's instant connection to the small-town, hockey mom turned politico. That other female icon, Hillary Clinton of the "Never heard of the branding business," is too much of an Ivy League self-assured, aggressive politician for them to relate to. She has to reinforce the idea that they can play hockey with hands and sympathize with her family's woes.

* * *

US pundits ask whether the Republican ticket shouldn't be called the Palin-McCain ticket. But in addition to the reflected glow of Sarah's star, the McCain surge must be attributed to two factors. One is the furniture during the Vietnam War. The other is the humiliation during the Democratic convention, and which, they stressed, is indicative of the words, without character he will bring to the presidency. The effect of this rhetoric call be really be a blow-off event, as he attempts to bring together the best talents to pull the United States out of the red, be they Republican, Democrat or independent. McCain is exactly echoing his idol, Ronald Reagan, who recruited people from various political groups, so that the views Reagan Democrats is still brought up today. McCain also exudes a quiet sincerity and doesn't pretend that his silent has the brilliance to rescue America, un-

as he was surrounded by his family (except teenage, who was on the phone with their beau Louis Lemaire), they chucked with the doctors whether he could still hear them. Given that assurance, Dad and the children took turns saying goodbye. They whispered into his ears. "Paul kasama. Bevi, you know how quite daffy will be for with, but I love you very much." He said that he had changed her in meals and helped her instruction as a writer and thinker.

* * *

But was a gentleman of the old school. He favored education showed in his punctuality, his suave manners and the bathroom of his thoughts. He held strong opinions on many issues, but he was open-minded and the respected those held strong views contrary to his own. He held many distinguished with the Bohemian and Intellectual friends at our home, and whenever voices would be raised, Tatay would just keep quiet, puff on a cigarette he'd speak when everyone piped down, and no would call him, as his decisions was always meant to cut but occasion together was in Legaspi. Albeit during the heated things adaptability tools, he was always the voice of reason and calm. Outside the conference, the fear of to talked about many things while touring into the cooks that Bevi enjoyed the look in in the same restaurant there was a lovely lunch at Mc Donald's. Mel and Tessie, our ambassadors, were quite close. Bert wanted to transform the Philippine Ambassadors Residence from a social gathering into an instrument for development. That was Bert before, quietly continued to connect, a true patriot.

* * *

I were an apology to budget Secretary Rolando Andaya and Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan. Originally slotted here for Andaya played the electric guitar at the vocal concert staged by impersonator Bella Sison Tuple for the benefit of media people in need due to illness. Actually it was Libanan who took the stage. My confusion was based on the fact that both officials are nicknamed Nonoy and just before I wrote that item, I saw Andaya on TV. That mistake gives me a chance to stress that Libanan's quite overtime was truly electrifying.

Amorsolo's sunlight

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

LAST SUMMER, MY HUSBAND AND I WERE driving to the late-morning movies in the Candaba area when it happened: in the glimmer of the half hour gone rice fields around us where other times stood in silent attention. Everything was bathed in the golden early-morning sunlight, and every leaf and stalk seemed to shimmer with an eerie glow.

I was hard put to put into words what I was seeing and feeling, until I exclaimed: "It's like an Amorsolo painting!" In awe, my husband, an artist himself, understood what I meant. We stared silently at the landscape we were moving through, marveling at the greatest of a man who had taught us how to "see" the sunlight.

That was why the exhibit "Fernando Amorsolo, the country's first National Artist, once actually existed "today." Perhaps this was because his art was so accessible, ever present and visible not just in paintings but even in calendars, greeting cards, book jackets and textbooks. The popularity of his works spawned a small industry of imitators and forgeries, such that the "Amorsolo style" soon became synonymous with the commercial, especially with the cheap knock-offs of genre scenes.

Today though, Filipinos are less nostalgic about our rural origins and so Amorsolo's works have become the subject of study. It took a historian like Dr. Alice Guillermo to curate the exhibit, write detailed wall-text and secure the loan of the artist's works from private collectors, proving early in both critiques and textbooks. The popularity of his works spawned a small industry of imitators and forgeries, such that the "Amorsolo style" soon became synonymous with the commercial, especially with the cheap knock-offs of genre scenes.

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* * *

"Ilib Art, fine Heart" is an unprecedented art education project that aims to revive interest in the art of Amorsolo, mainly through a series of museum exhibit that reveals aspects of his legacy: from his images of women, both idyllic and sensual; his landscapes and scenes of rural festivities; his portraits of wealthy and influ-

ential clients; and even the illustrations he provided for grade-school readers.

Launching the project is the exhibit "Amorsolo, His Contemporaries and Pictures of War Capturing Resistance" which opens Sept. 23 at the Ayala Museum, with works from the artist's own collection. Also during the war years, some of which chronicle the atrocities he witnessed at the time. The rest of the exhibits will run until April 2009.

While Amorsolo is rightly remembered for his unique, breathtaking ability to depict the sunlight, tropical weather and native beauty, as well as in treasured rituals and scenes from inner idyllic rural setting (he spent his childhood in Buri, Lumutan Bautis), the exhibits will also showcase the full range of his artistry, highlighting various techniques that he employed to expand his horizons.

* * *

"Ilib Art, fine Heart" is presented by the Metrobank Group in collaboration with many private and public sponsors and collaborators, with proceeds from the project (through sales of tickets, peripherals and sponsorship) earmarked for Gawad Kalinga.

* * *

THERE will be a send-off and fund-raising party for Ancle Louis, the first Filipino to qualify for the Ironman Triathlon Championships in Kona, Hawaii, this October. The party, to be held on Friday, Sept. 12, starts at 8 p.m. at the Bling-Bar Café on Jorobatch in High Street, Bonifacio Global City in Taguig. Tickets are available at P1,000.

* * *

There's an interesting story behind Andy party's patron in the Kona race. She had raced in Thailand earlier this year and qualified for Kona when she won the competition. She was supposed to receive a prize of $5,000 which she had planned to use to get here in Kona, but even after spending time in Bangkok to wait for the race promoter to come across, the promoter simply disappeared and her came home triumphant but with no prize money in hand.

An experienced triathlete who has mounted several marathons, her racing her family's coach, Andy, is also racing in Kona. But she assures us he has done that needed for all the entry requirements of international competitions.

To help her get a start on winning in Kona, friends organized the party and sold off hot tin. If you want to help this lucky girl get here, give her an invite to a call or text at (0928) 841-1944. And if she reaches Hawaii in Hawaii, or those with family or friends there, encourage them to turn up for the Kona Triathlon and cheer for our very own racer.

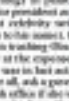
* * *

THE FRIEDRICH who will be on the ride of desire on the opening night of "Next Side Story" was Sunsara Silaa, and not Pam Li as I wrote in Sunday's column. Born in Australia, Sunsara was part of the Australian team of "Miss Saigon" and this was where she met Leo Valdez, already recognized as the VRE Engineer. It was Leo who told Andy, producer of "Next Side Story," about Sunsara when they were desperately searching for someone to play Anita. Judging from the results of the opening night, Leo can certainly take some credit for the musical's success.

The unbearable lightness of Philippine hypocrisy

NEWSSTAND

Jullie Yap Daza



SINGAPORE—IT IS IN THE REPUBLICAN MARTY'S best interests to lose the November elections. Hasn't its power have so debased the party of Lincoln it has corrupted even language itself (an incomparable instrument in Orwell's eyes, and an indomitable part of his legacy).

Consider Sarah Palin.

John McCain's running mate is attractive and easy to like. Tina Fey with a mouse gun. Life magazine cuts an exclusive cover featuring the "Saturday Night Live" comedienne and McCain, still in Straight Talk Express mode, a few years back, posing with a rifle. Palin is a real All-American go-getter we're all sure naturally courageous, pleasantly assertive, earnest and self-sufficient.

She is also a liar. Or, alternatively, her acceptance speech was a concatenation of lies.

I realize that, as Orwell reminded us half a century ago, political language is designed to make even worst then it sounds, and that campaign rhetoric, almost by definition, uses the promises of exaggeration. But the kind of lies we found from the Republicans in St. Paul was out of the ordinary. Emotionally, St. Paul is the charming town that surrounded F. Scott Fitzgerald, another great American writer who closely followed the relation-ship between fiction and terminal breakdown.)

At their political convention, the Republicans went beyond being economical with the truth; they positively splurged on the untruths.

Palin's every lying is a lie to accurate enough word. The language of the party's power has clearly undergone an Orwellian transformation, where words either don't mean anything, or they mean the exact opposite of what they are supposed to mean. When the party to power the last eight years (six of them with control of Congress) can call itself the standard of "change," what does being the party to power mean?

Palin's acceptance speech (which neared the delegates inside the hall and entranced many viewers watching on television) was the high light—or the low point—of this sordid triumph of illusion.

* * *

Palin also mocked Obama's previous career as a community organizer, implying it wasn't a real job. "I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a 'community organizer,' except that you have actual responsibilities."

It's not true, but you don't see about the truth. (The comedian Stephen Colbert caught the true nature of the hoax that has run wild during the Bush years when he coined the fake concept of "truthiness.")

So it happens, the best opinion to this comedian-actor-writer-producer-director and community organizer is a line I first stumbled upon in Facebook. Some was a community organizer. Besides, Hitler was a governor."

Everything about the Palin speech was designed to appeal to the sense of traditional America. The girls (Bristol Palin's pregnancy notwithstanding) two mavericks, the gift her fictional account of the governor's alleged opposition to the so-called "Bridge to Nowhere." (She was for it before she was against it.)

That each fakery can work in superficial magical, Orwellian fashion's dubious example—it is so terrifying.

I wouldn't be surprised if what may have been Palin's most effective moment, the pause and point to the "Rodney Mute" placards in the convention hall and then the now famous "lipstick" joke, turned out to be scripted too.

* * *

To be sure, the Palin appointment is a true game changer. The dynamics of the 2008 elections have changed dramatically. The question is: Why did McCain change the game plan when he was leading in the polls? (Some speculate that some of the Republican party has been ransomed, but as has the Democrat's over time. After McCain named Palin as his running mate, the Republicans received something like $10 million in new campaign donations. But after Palin gave her acceptance speech, the Democrats received something like $20 million too.

* * *

Email: jmyap@pacbell.net

YOUNG BLOOD

Joseph Jadraq D. Marasigan

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below. —Ed.

I'M NOT SURE IF I'M ALONE IN THIS, but I often compare myself to my peers. Where I stand in life, how I'm doing in school, how I'm faring in the open forum. When the summer was over, I kept in touch by e-mail and managed to get her mobile phone number since by telling her I wanted to invite her to give a lecture to my students in the university where I work. Subsequently we've exchanged text messages a few times, and to her home, a meeting with her parents. Before we knew it, we found ourselves planning to get married at the soonest time possible.

It isn't going to be easy since I feel that I have an obligation to contribute to the material well-being of my family being the only child of a public school teacher and a retired One of the things my parents discussed into my head when I was still young was not to take relationships seriously that marriage can wait until I have saved enough money to make living a little easy.

My parents' wish has, of course, always been that I find work abroad and earn more than the meager salary I receive as a university instructor. This seems contradictory to my aspirations to stay around. But unfortunately we live in a society where an individual is measured not by his passions and yearning to serve his country but by the prestige that accompanied wealth and status provide. At times, I find myself finding resentful about how the elite "hegemony" has so pervaded the consciousness of our people that in love one's life as an activist in the name of social change is to risk isolation. The dominant class is no longer ruling by coercion, but with the consent of those who are ruled, precisely because the ruling ideology has become the normative ideology even among those who are oppressed by the unjust structures of our society.

Like a tragic poet, I have always struggled to marry personal normalcy over the things I experience. Thanks to the vocabulary of sociology, I was able to understand my process of conversion as in accordance to the universal features of the society I live in, beginning with my family.

"Hindi kaba ng isang sa diyan, at hindi kaba ng guro nang si pwede," my mother used to admonish me. When I was 14, I told my parents that I was signing up for the "Batang Bato" project of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) since election were fast approaching then. But as expected, my parents were not pleased and I was reprimanded by it and said violence. This thought made my parents very anxious about allowing me to join the group which I thought was valiantly crusading to preserve the sanctity of votes. I felt so bad when my parents did not allow me to join the group because I thought I was doing something honorable. I did not protest because I remembered my mother's words: "Hindi kaba ng isang sa diyan, at hindi kaba ng guro nang si pwede." Besides I felt I was in no position to protest since I was just 14.

When I turned 16, my eyes began to see the contradictions in our political and economic institutions. This made me interested in joining activist groups. But again my parents scoffed about the idea, because of the perils and restrictions associated with activism. I decided to respect their decision. Nevertheless, I still joined rallies although not as a member of any militant organization.

Resisting my part, I now think that joining rallies and defying my parents' explicit warning were the beginning of my own struggle at self-creation. It gave me confidence to know that I could choose to be something without previously choosing it with my parents.

Children are like pristine glass marbles by the fingerprints of to handles. There is always a wish to free ourselves from the self-image supplied to us by the authority figures of our lives—parents, teachers and significant others. We want to see ourselves naked, without the mediation of those who have known us and shaped our lives. Marcel Proust's "Remembrance of Things Past" is the literary work that I regret is a paradigm for this kind of self-reminiscences. Looking back, Proust began to see his authority figures in a new way no longer as moral superiors but as "fellow sufferers." In this context, he began to see the origin of his beliefs, many, finding that

Now in 20, I am certain of what I want in life. I see myself leisurely pursuing my academic life and starting my own family with Perla and our future kids. Mabuti ko sipa, pakakasalan ko sya, at 'yun ang sana. So, I willed it!

Joseph Jadraq D. Marasigan, 20, teaches sociology at Manuel L. Quezon University Foundation. He is also a graduate student of sociology at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the post. Just send a finding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Honoring soldiers

"Every soldier is our human or we are. When wounded, we also suffer the pain. Sometimes we agonize. We would like to remember [our soldiers] for their heroism and sacrifice and not the indignities of the suffering when dying."

—Brig. Gen. Jorge Segovia, acting chief of the AFP Command Center, after Abbu Sayyaf rebels refuse to bring home

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Anatomy of parasites

THE TERM PARASITE, WHEN applied to a person, is defined as someone who lives solely at the expense of society or of others. Scientists appears to so many forms, but the most hideous and despicable form of parasitism is when one mobilizes itself to government. It is like a silkworm-like that lurks and ultimately spoils what, ever grand plans there are for good governance.

A typical parasite in government is an employee who reports to office but doesn't do anything worthy of his or her salary, his or she belongs to the class of employees known as "ghosts" and sometimes called "waning parasites" because all they do is sign the payroll.

Said above are the "cheating parasites," those who report late or don't report at all and yet appear on time in their DTRs (daily time records). There are also the "cheating parasites," those who consume their time by useless musings and hamstring, thus ending up, at the end of the day, haggard and harassed yet unproductive. But the most ignominious are the hydra-monster parasites, those who steal their salaries with the privileges that go with their office and stories that their relatives are employed or, if already employed, promoted without regard to their aramic capability.

The Bible says "you cannot put new wine in an old wineskin, otherwise the old wineskin will burst and the new wine will be wasted." The new wine symbolizes the idealism of public service; the old wineskin resembles public servants whose only concern is their personal aggrandizement as well as that of their offspring.

Public service is humanized if public officers are treated by them as private like personal property. Public service is trivialized if incompetent persons are appointed to it by reason of their "connections" and not by merit.

With parasites dominating the government, good governance will just be an illusion, a pie-in-the-sky—nothing but empty and hollow promises.

To ignore one department head in the local government. You very de-

up point
ing middle
managing to work in the government because all you see is graft and corruption, maniacal manipulations [of power] to promote vested interest at the expense of civil servants. With this kind of attitude, it is downright naive and pueblo to expect good governance to take root. It will take herculean moral strength to change government of parasites.

I hoping against all hope, I still believe that the few who remain faithful to their calling, giving their best for the people, will remain steadfast in their determination to make a better government worthy of the trust of the Filipino people.

I long for the day when every government employee can say in all honesty and confidence: "I am a government employee, and I am proud of it."

—SERGIO T. PEÑOLIA JR.,
local government
operations officer V,
MLG Provincial Office,
Misamis Oriental

Judiciary takes irreparable hit

THE CHARGES AND COUNTER-charges of corruption involving justices of the Court of Appeals not only reveal that there really are hoodlums in robes; they also confirm claims made by dedicated litigants that many decisions in that court are for sale.

It is very lamentable that our country's second highest bastion of justice is tarnished by men who decide cases out of greed, not on the merits. This is corruption at its highest level.

Whatever the outcome of the ongoing investigation being conducted by a Supreme Court-formed panel, it will very hard for the judiciary to recover from this shameful scandal of backing up to the courts as an impartial judge, the public will now regard them with contempt, distrust and misbelief.

I heartbreak by what have we plan to our society. They are doing capital disservice to our justice system. They are a disgrace to our nation. For a clean, honest and impartial judiciary, it is up into hands to start a housecleaning drive.

—ERIC COLUMNA,
<ericolumna@yahoo.com

Congress can be manipulated easily

IMAGINE THE INTERNATIONAL impact of the agreement on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Philippines had the formal signing of the memorandum of agreement on enhanced Philippine-RP-US joint forces between the Philippines and the Philippines serving as witnesses, in the presence of diplomatic representatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the United States, Japan and Australia, countries that are interested in taking advantage of the decision of Philippine domestic called the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity.

And you know who pushed the dangerous figment to speed up the acceptance of the agreement, and only the heavy.

It was argued that the RIA-AO would still have to go through Congress and a plebiscite. I doubt the credibility of the outcome of the congressional and voting process. To me, there has never been a credible, honest and peaceful electoral exercise. And there has never been a Congress that has not succumbed to Palace machinations.

For Filipinos, like the indios of colonial times, will continue to be indifferent in their critical views. Despite their number, they cannot move. Perhaps, just perhaps, if we convert to Islam, or renounce Christianity for another faith without losing belief in the True God, we might find our way toward proper governance and economic prosperity for our people.

—MALOU ROMUALDO
(U. MALOU Ret.)

Fight against early campaigning

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO recently thanks the incumbent for joining her call for election reforms in our country. ("Erap's local endorsement," Inquirer, 8/29/00.)

In our continuing fight against premature campaigning, our office has filed with the Supreme Court a petition for certiorari. We are now awaiting the high court's action on the matter and we are hopeful that the spirit of the law will prevail.

We fully appreciate the media for supporting Senator Santiago's initiatives, and we hope that the entire support will be extended to other senators other legislative agenda.

—JOSE EL VILLEGAS,
public affairs and
media relations officer,
Office of Sen. Miriam
Defensor-Santiago

FOR BRINGS HEALTHCARE TO ILOILO NEWSVENDORS. The Philippine Daily Inquirer and Inquirer Publications Inc., through the efforts of Iloilo newsbuilders Jim and Mia Fulgoni, extended free thanks to their frontline business partners by conducting the Iloilo leg of their year-long medical mission. The mission was held last July 30 at the YMCA Gym. Over 300 newsvendors, as well as their families, received free medical check-ups and medicines courtesy of the program's longtime partner, United Laboratories (Unilab).

MILF has turned into a terrorist organization

THE GOVERNMENT SAYS THAT AS ALL out war with the rebels will lead to an endless war for generations. What it means—or perhaps it knows, but plays blind to, that reality—is that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front is no longer a group of rebels with a legitimate cause. It is now, like the Abu Sayyaf and the Jemaah Islamiyah, a group of terrorists.

MILF terrorists have harassed, robbed and murdered innocent civilians and looted homes and villages. Because they are terrorists, there should be no peace talks with them. The government should go after them and capture all their camps.

There camps serve not only as havens for terrorists but also shelter factories, and the government is not supposed to enter these camps.

No ceasefire and no peace talks, please.

—RACHEL REGALADO,
<lipas_kalinaw@yahoo.com>

GMA should follow example of Musharraf

IF I WERE PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo, I would not hesitate for a moment to follow the example set very recently by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. I would tender my resignation.

I am making this suggestion considering her record low unpopularity, which is obvious in recent surveys. Anyway, she has already served the Filipino people for more than eight years—longer than Fidel Ramos, Cory Aquino and Joseph Estrada did. Besides, before becoming President, GMA also served our country as a senator, then as vice president. Indeed, GMA has been blessed more than many former public servants from heaven.

Her resignation would serve as a graceful exit. It would save her from another impeachment complaint. This is my friendly advice to her.

—ESTEBAN R. TOPACIO JR.,
Brgy. Salamanca cor. L. Sarita Sts.,
San Roque, Cavite City 4100

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Gov't to MILF: Give us Kato, Bravo, Sulaiman and we'll give you ₱25M

A MILITARY convoy encounters traffic along the national highway in Carmen, Cotabato. The government troops are now on the heels of Moro rebel commanders wanted for launching attacks in the provinces of North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte last month.

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY OFFERED to give to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front the combined ₱25-million bounty for its three most wanted commanders if the MILF surrendered them, but the MILF said the men were "not for sale."

In a press statement, Interior and Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno said that the bounty could be used to help develop Muslim communities once Ameril Umbra Kato, Abdulla Macapaar and Aleem Sulaiman were turned over to authorities.

Puno announced last week that the government had doubled the reward to ₱10 million each for the capture of Kato and Macapaar, also known as Commander Bravo. Another ₱5 million was offered for Sulaiman.

"Our commanders are not for sale," Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief peace negotiator, told the Inquirer by phone. To give them up would be "unethical," he said.

Iqbal said that the MILF would investigate the three commanders to determine the validity of government accusations that they raided towns in North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte and slaughtered scores of civilians.

"If they indeed committed any violations, then it's the MILF that would punish them," Iqbal said. He said that the best way to resolve the ongoing conflict in Central Mindanao was through the joint committee on the cessation of hostilities.

Aldher Ibrahim

GOVERNMENT troops pass along the national highway in Datu Saudi town in Maguindanao. At least six civilians were killed in the latest military operations against Moro rebels near Datu Piang on Monday.

Fighting resumes in Mindanao

From page A1

tone in Datu Piang," Robiala told the Inquirer by phone.

Col. Marlon Solinap, commander of the 601st Brigade, said his men killed at least seven rebels in the clash with the group of MILF commander Wahid Tundok around 9:30 a.m.

Solinap said about 50 guerrillas were sighted in Xilin Dagangke early evening of Sunday and they engaged the ground troops in a five-hour Monday morning. He said the rebels, armed with cal. 50 machine guns, 3mm as well as two helicopters and six strikes were sighted.

Maj. Gen. Hermoge Reny, chief of the Philippine Air Force 3rd Air Division, said four planes dropped rockets as a "defensive move to prevent access, escalation of violence." He said no bombs were used while the rockets was meant to counter the MILF fighters.

No civilians in battle zone

Both Puno and Solinap could not immediately confirm the MILF report of civilian deaths.

"Those who claimed there were children fatalities were not in the area, [there were] no civilians there except government troops and MILF rebels," said Solinap. "I think if there were children there, it would be the young MILF fighters, their child warriors."

Government forces have been sent to hunt down Ameril Umbra Kato and Abdullah Macapaar, also known as Commander Bravo, after the two raided towns in North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte, killing scores of civilians, including women and children.

MILF leaders said Kato and Bravo were preventing the delay in the signing on Aug. 5 of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) on an expanded Autonomous Homeland Government one in security in July in Kuala Lumpur in negotiations brokered by Malaysia. The Supreme Court stopped the deal after Mindanao executives denounced the move as unconstitutional, saying it would lead to the dismemberment of the republic.

Around 180 civilians and several dozen soldiers have died in the months violence, according to government agencies and the military. The military claims troops have killed more than 320 MILF fighters, but the MILF confirmed only seven deaths.

Gunz fell silence after the start on Monday of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, although small clashes were reported.

Number of evacuees swells

Solinap said civilians in Barangay Tee started fleeing again upon seeing armed MILF in the village Sunday evening. "They were here known that anytime there will be fighting."

Tee said evacuees in the town center had begun returning home but the number was expected to swell again as a result of the fresh outbreak of fighting.

"I am so sad with the resumption of hostilities because it's fasting month and the people are tired and tired of evacuating," Tee said.

Iqbal claimed government troops dispatched to Tee to verify MILF sightings clashed with an undetermined number of rebels under Commander Wahid Tundok, Kutawato Inquirer reports.

"We were informed by civilians about the rebels' sightings in the villages of Tee. We have sent soldiers in the area and it's positive. The enemy also landed our place 8.215. It returned fire but we did not fire howitzers," Solinap said.

But Iqbal claimed no clashes happened, just the military air strikes. "We have reported the incidents to the coordinating committee on cessation of hostilities but their function right now is limited," Robiala said.

Muslims denounce military

The Philippine Darul Ifta (House of Opinion), a collegial body of Islamic scholars and religious leaders, condemned the military operation.

"The military should have respected the rights of the civilians. They cannot even burn their houses because they have to run every now and then," Datuk Ismael Rumbu, spokesperson of Darul Ifta, told the Inquirer.

"The issue in Maguindanao is police matters. And there should be no use of bombs, cannons and more troops," he added. Reporters Jeyra Wahab, Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Mindanao; Alikka Dizon and Nona Quintanilla in Manila

Bomb explodes near market; another defused

From page A1

of the MILF," Solinap said.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, denied involvement in the bombing. "We are not into it. We are revolutionaries and we do not do what terrorists do," Kabalu said.

Gen. Alexander Yano, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, yesterday assured that facilities that rebels could resort to terror attacks.

"They have splintered into smaller units and are evading government troops, and we anticipate that they might resort to terrorist acts or guerrilla [warfare] in small and splintered formations," Yano told reporters.

"There are contingency situations [that] have to be anticipated and preparations have to be made, but definitely these cannot be announced," he said. Reports from Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao; Nikka Dizon and AFP

MILITANT group League of Filipino Students stages a protest at the foot of historic Otis-Nuevo Bridge in Manila, denouncing the war in Mindanao.

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Across the NATION

Nur calls for reunification in Mindanao

NEWSBRIEFS

■ BATANGAS

Globe cell site bombed

SUSPECTED New People's Army guerrillas attacked the cell site of Globe Telecom in Barangay Sto. Niño, Taysan town in Batangas before midnight Sunday.

Taysan police chief Senior Insp. Efren Alonso said in a phone interview that the caretaker of Globe Telecom's cell site in Barangay Sto. Niño called these up at around 11:45 p.m. to report that the facility's radio equipment exploded and the generator set was burning.

Alonso said the caretaker's quarters was 100 meters away from the cell site so he did not witness the actual bombing.

Nilo Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ CAVITE

41 hurt in LPG blast

FORTY-ONE persons were injured after a delivery truck carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanks exploded in Carmona, Cavite, on Saturday morning.

Carmona police chief Senior Insp. Joselito Saceda said the truck was supposed to deliver LPG tanks to factories inside the South Coast Industrial Estate in Barangay Cabuyao at about 7:40 a.m.

The explosion sparked a fire in a residential area near the industrial estate that injured 41 people.

Nilo Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ QUEZON

8 held for fake bills

SIX PERSONS suspected of distributing counterfeit peso bills were arrested by Quezon police Sunday, a police report said.

The report identified the suspects as Blaise Diaz, Enrique Valerio, Marlon Tan, Eduardo Chico Jr., Vimar Garcia and Mona Perez, all residents of Barangay Gapang, Pasay, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

The police confiscated 10 pieces of fake P1,000 bills from the suspects, who revealed that three of their cohorts had escaped.

Emilio Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ ZAMBOANGA CITY

Tenda exec slain

THE ADMINISTRATOR of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) in Western Mindanao was shot dead in front of his office in Barangay San Roque here around 7:20 a.m. Friday.

City police chief Senior Supt. Leonel Estrada said Nicanor Pacardo died from a fatal wound to the head after he was shot by his friend, who was also identified as Ben Blanzon.

No eyewitness report exists. (5 caliber pistol in shooting the government official, before fleeing. "We are still investigating," he said.

Jude Abrahi, Inquirer Mindanao

■ DAVAO DEL SUR

Freed whale shark dies

THE WHALE SHARK that beached in Padada town and was eventually released back to sea on Thursday was found dead near the shore of Barangay Poblacion Friday morning.

The province's fisheries office said it could not determine what caused the death of the 5-feet long fish, which has a diameter of 0.6 feet.

The whale shark, weighing about one ton, was found by fisherman Ariel Dog-Ruding near his home in Barangay Poblacion here on Thursday.

Orlando Dacoy, Inquirer Mindanao

■ LANGUEN, Pangasinan

Charges filed vs mayor's killers

THE PROVINCIAL police filed murder charges against the six suspects in the killing of Agno Mayor Alfred Celestino on Aug. 2.

Charged were Jorge Saulo, the suspected gunman; Rodrigo Miranda and Ramon Ribina Jr., all of Barangay Tiric, Formal in Alaga; Nicasio Erija, A police report said Celestino was killed by suspected gun-for-hire members.

"But only three were charged with murder (because) Task Force Celestino was still receiving evidence to indict the other personalities who masterminded the killing," the report said.

The report quoted an Alaga resident who said he knew the suspects and heard them talking about the killing. A police security account of Celestino also identified Saulo from cartographic sketches.

Yolanda Duldulao-Ramirez, Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ ROXAS CITY

3 prisoners flee

THREE inmates broke out of the Roxas City police station detention cell about 2:30 a.m. Monday.

The police identified the three escapees as Jhonard Manguiran, Jovan Calderon and Crisanto Oliva, all from Roxas City.

However, the police recaptured Oliva at Barangay 2, also in Roxas City, about 3 hours after the escape. The three escaped by sawing through the iron bars of their detention cell.

Felipe Celino, Inquirer Visayas

LOST IN THE TERRAIN
This dog seems lost in the rare terrain that displaced its old haunts in the landslide-hit village of Masara in Maco town, Compostela Valley province.

COTABATO CITY—CALLING Mayor Muslimin Sema of this city a fake Moro National Liberation Front head, MNLF founding chair Nur Misuari has called for reunification in Mindanao.

The MNLF is preparing to attend an Organization of the Islamic Conference-sponsored "high-level peace talks" to be held in cities in Egypt or Indonesia.

The meeting "soon after the Holy Month of Ramadan to be held either in Cairo or Bali" was an offshoot of a recent "low-level meeting" at the Indonesian Embassy, said Misuari, who claimed no have been repatriated by trusted MNLF members in the meeting.

Misuari had been detained by the government on charges of rebellion when he reportedly led an offensive in Jolo that killed about a hundred people. He has been out on bail since April this year.

'Preparatives'

"The Department of Justice was able to convince the court to prevent me from participating in the low-level peace talks as it was not fit for me to be involved there," Misuari said in a radio interview.

Misuari, who claimed to be still the recognized MNLF leader, has not addressed, said Sema had been installed as MNLF chair by some 100 members, who are mostly rebel commanders.

Comparing his MNLF grand meeting on May 24 in Davao City that had a police head count of some 120,000 as opposite of Sema's 300 to "preparatives," said Misuari, who called on Sema to go back home to his mother's grave.

The MNLF, organized by Misuari in the early 1970s to fight the Marcos dictatorship as it likewise called for the establishment of an independent state, has had so many splintered groups—the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, led by his former lieutenant and right hand Hashim Salamat, the present Moro-created MNLF Reformist Group headed by Ibrahim Paglas, followed by some others, the most recent of which was the MNLF Executive Committee of 15, then led by Rashid Ekman.

Misuari's leadership was short-lived as a "coup" had installed Sema as their new leader after the Zamboanga and Pagadian conventions attended by about 500 members of MNLF (ex-members), Misuari said.

According to Misuari, Sema and his followers "had been expelled from the membership and leadership of the MNLF as early as March 2001 during MNLF's Third National Congress."

'Bogus'

"They are not members of MNLF anymore and therefore, their claim is bogus. It does not hold any water at all," said Misuari.

Sema brushed aside Misuari's claim, saying key MNLF officials elected him to replace the detained Moro rebel leader whose term was declared expired on November 1996 when a signed the final peace pact with the Ramos government.

Sema, however, was silent on reports that Misuari is still the recognized MNLF leader of the 47-member Islamic states.

Misuari said the October meeting will discuss the full implementation of the government-MNLF peace agreement on Tripoli, Libya, in 1976 as final here in 1996.

To be discussed are the establishment of shariah courts and madrasa concerning education, security, political and socioeconomic system. "This sets the outcome of the wrecking low-level talks held at the Indonesian Embassy in Manila.

The Arroyo administration had allowed the incarcerated rebel leader to participate in the 35th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Kuri Alicia which was held in June.

Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

11,000 Guimaras studes get transport subsidy

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

JORO CITY—IN A BID TO BOOST the enrollment and completion rates of high school students in Guimaras, Rep. Ki Pahamutang Nava has launched a transportation subsidy program that would provide free rides to school.

The "Sakay Eskwela" program that benefits 11,000 high school students in the island province was launched last week.

Data from the Provincial Information Office (PIO) indicate that secondary schools in Guimaras had a decline in enrollment from school year 2004 to 2007. However, there was a slight increase in school year 2007-2008.

Out of a projected total population of 161,044 belonging to the 12- to 15-year-old range, more than half or 8,664 are not of school or still in the elementary grades.

From 2004 to 2007, the participation rate of high school students in Guimaras ranged from 43.87 percent to 48 percent, which was below the national standard of 77.71 percent. The completion rate, from 47.08 percent to 65.72 percent, was also below the standard of 69.32 percent.

The Department of Education's low participation and completion rates in secondary schools in the province to poverty. Aside from school fees, parents have to spend for school uniforms, supplies, projects, allowances and transportation fees.

The August 2006 oil spill also affected the elementary and high school students as it distracted thousands of families who were left without livelihood for several months.

A rapid assessment report released by the provincial government a few months after the oil spill ruined the increasing incidences of absences, cutting of school allowance of children and illnesses associated with the oil spill.

The school attendance in August 2006 significantly dropped in schools in Nueva Valencia, except in Barangay Valencia, close to Jordan National High School.

The Cabalagnan National High School, situated in the village based on his by the oil spill, had the lowest school attendance at 86 percent, the report said.

The attendance in public elementary schools in Jordan also dropped in the same period. Ibajay Jordan Municipal High School had the least attendance at 73 percent.

The assessment team attributed the decrease in attendance to students working in the clean-up operations while others were indeed by parents to take care of younger children while their parents worked in the clean-up.

The program estimated to cost from P1.8 million to P2.0 million annually will be funded from Town's Priority Development Assistance Fund and realized through the provincial government.

Under the program, which started last Aug. 26, all high school students receive daily a one-way fare subsidy, ranging from P5 to P20, from their residence to their school.

The subsidy will cover students in 17 public high schools, five in Buenavista, two in Jordan, five in Nueva Valencia, three in Sibunag and two in San Lorenzo.

School principals issue a coupon to students that they use to pay the drivers the one-day said lawyer John Edward Tando, Nava's chief of staff.

Standoff for mayoral post in Palawan island town

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—HOPEFUL rivals of the incumbent mayor of Bataraza, a remote island municipality in southern Palawan, have put up a 24-hour vigil in the municipal hall in a bid to prevent an opponent, declared by the Commission on Elections last month as the winning candidate, from taking over the post.

"We are staying put in the municipal hall until everything is cleared up," former Bataraza mayor Iris de Jesus, wife of incumbent mayor Samuel de Jesus, told the Inquirer Monday.

De Jesus said the order issued last August 29 by Regional Trial Court Branch 51 Judge Clito Mengullano upholding the victory of candidate Jun Ellongan Pandilla as the winner in the last mayoral election, had been nullified by an order released Sept. 3 by the Comelec en banc placing Bataraza under "status quo."

Pandilla has challenged the results of the last local elections where De Jesus was proclaimed winner by over 300 votes, claiming among others that non-existing persons were registered in favor of the declared winner.

Mengullano, in an order issued in the last week of August, proclaimed Pandilla as the winner.

Bataraza, Palawan's northernmost municipality located in the Cuyonnon Islands group, has a population of 30,000 people.

The provincial office of the Department of Interior and Local Government last Friday reported it tried to convince De Jesus to vacate the municipal hall but this was ignored by the latter, claiming that the RTC decision was tainted with political color.

"It is sad that there seems to be the hands of some powerful local officials behind this decision, from the DILG owner to be influenced," De Jesus told the Inquirer.

Pandilla, whom De Jesus claims is he a relative of Palawan Governor Joel T. Reyes, was reached by the Inquirer through text messaging but has not replied.

The Inquirer learned that Pandilla supporters have assumed of the municipal building located in the same compound as the municipal jail building. —Redempto D. Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon

300 fishers protest oil exploration in Cebu-Bohol Strait

By Kit Bagaipo
and Jhannet Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

TAGBILARAN CITY—SOME 300 FISHERS from Siburan and Argao held Monday morning a floral parade to denounce their protest over the offshore oil exploration of Norwegian firm Igo Ltd. in the Cebu-Bohol Strait.

Wilbert Bitsol of Pamosa fought told the fishers on that although the actual oil drilling has not yet started, the team is already conducting the second phase of its survey to put up its drilling.

The fluvial protest, which started at 8 a.m. Monday, aimed to surround the site where seismic tests would be conducted by Swedish oil and gas exploration ships. Bitsol said in a telephone interview.

He added that the ongoing survey would not cause damage to the sea.

Labico said the fish pens were placed in the area to obstruct the ongoing location site survey.

Before the Swedish vessel conducted the survey, he said, the company has cleared out the area and even paid P 50,000 each to the owners of the fish pens in Siburan.

However, Labico said Bonbanan people were surprised when several fish pens suddenly appeared on Sept. 4.

He said the fish pens were set up to further obstruct or for other unknown motives.

Norkem is a subsidiary of Australian firm Otto Energy.

In an advisory to the DOE, Otto reported that it is raising $11.6 million to fund the oil drilling off Argao, Cebu side and near Calubian Island in Leyte, Bohol side.

The DOE has likewise approved the exploration work programs of Otto covering the Sibonga Sea until March 2009 to drill the first wells in the area.

Otto Energy chief executive officer Alan Hicks in an interview on Sept. 1, 2008, that was posted on the company website cited Argao as attractive prospect that has eight potential oil structures.

In the same interview, Hicks said its subsidiary Norkem Energy would start drilling the area in the first half of 2009.

He also disclosed that they were targeting an area north of Argao called Bohay that has similar characteristics to Argao.

Hicks said that Argao and Bohay have a pre-drill resource of over 300 million barrels of recoverable oil.

3 senators slam Atienza over landslides

RESCUERS recover a body on Monday from a village buried by a landslide in Pacac more in Mindanao. Some 23 houses were destroyed by a torrent of mud and rocks that cascaded down the slopes on Sunday. AFP

By DJC. Cabacungan Jr. and Kristine L. Alave

THREE SENATORS YESTERDAY SCORED Environment Secretary Lito Atienza for failing to heed the warnings of his agency's own technical experts who declared the village of Manuvo a "high-risk zone" and recommended that it be evacuated.

An official of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has called for an investigation of the two landslides that devastated the mining village in Compostela Valley, expressing fears that the tragedy was caused by "irresponsible mining."

Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo, chair of the CBCP's National Secretariat for Social Action Justice and Peace, said the government should get to the bottom of the landslide, which killed at least 16 people, and left more than a dozen missing.

"As early as late 2006, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau had already warned the area and declared it a high-risk zone. More importantly, our MGB source said they recommended the evacuation of residents from that area. Why were the communities not transferred? The Department of Environment and Natural Resources should explain," Sen. Pia Cayetano said.

High-risk activity

Cayetano, chair of the Senate committee on environment and natural resources, called for a reexamination of the impact of mining on the area and how it could have possibly contributed to the landslides.

"Mining will always be a high-risk activity. As such, DENR and local government must be vigilant in ensuring its health and safety impact on the people," she said.

Apex Mining Corp. and Dat Bintick Ilaw Cross Gold Corp. operate in Manuvo.

While Cayetano called for a probe, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada urged Atienza and his "unqualified" cohorts at the DENR to resign.

"Compostela Valley is already an environmentally critical area. The DENR under Secretary Atienza should explain why until now there is still unregulated mining in the province. Should he fail to do so, Secretary Atienza and his cronies from Manila City Hall who, I was told, are now holding it over the DENR, should resign now," said Madrigal.

Madrigal was referring to reports that Atienza had filled key positions in the DENR with his former allies in City Hall whose only qualifications were their affiliation with the former Manila mayor.

They include Don Bagatsing, Natural Resources Development president; Elmira Quiros, undersecretary for field operations and president of Philippine Forest Corp.; Gerina Sebastian, Land Management Bureau assistant director; Leah Buenaventura, assistant secretary; and Deogracias Tabios, executive director of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Project.

Power broken

Madrigal said she would look into reports that since Atienza's appointment in July last year, the DENR had been run like City Hall with some of Atienza's allies acting as power brokers.

"The unregulated and wanton destruction by mining operations in Compostela Valley should now be stopped. How many more lives in this government willing to trade for unregulated and abusive mining activities," said Madrigal.

Sen. Mar Roxas said the DENR has a lot to answer for the environmental disaster in Compostela Valley.

"These landslides are recurring. They have not learned. Isn't this why ECCs (environment clearance certificates) are issued?" asked Roxas.

Prayers for victims

Pabillo said he was saddened by the tragedy and asked the faithful to pray for the victims and their families.

In a phone interview, Pabillo said the landslides should be investigated to determine whether these had something to do with "irresponsible mining, which the CBCP has been opposing."

The CBCP has been against the government's policy to open land to foreign large-scale mining companies, saying it is detrimental to communities and the environment.

Senior mining firms and was instrumental in the suspension of operations of Australia's Lafayette Mining in Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

Mom saved 4 kids . . .

Front page, A1

Ten people died in a landslide that hit the mine village last year.

President Macapagal-Arroyo consulted with the families of victims of the landslides.

The President has directed the National Disaster Coordinating Council to ensure that the police and military were helping the local disaster coordinating council in locating missing victims.

Among the families was Evangelin Angeles (see Anggeles as earlier reported), the village chair, whose body was dug up by rescuers in around 11 a.m. yesterday.

His two daughters, including 17-year-old Eljoth who was a radio show his reporter in Tagum City, and a grandchild, remain under tons of mud and landslides that buried their home and several other houses.

Of nine people reported killed as of Sunday, six bodies were retrieved yesterday from under mud and boulders, while another was found swept by a rampaging river following the rain landslides here over the weekend.

The body found in Masuli River was believed to have been swept some 21 kilometers downstream from Manuvo.

Local government units of Maco and Tagum City as well as Apex Mining Corp., which operates in the area, have sent earth-moving equipment and personnel for the digging up of bodies.

Slim chance

"The chance of finding survivors is now very slim," said Alberto Angca, team leader of a rescue group sent by Tagum City Mayor Rey Uy. "We're requesting more body bags for the recovery."

Some, including the coauthors of Eljoth Angeles, are not losing hope.

Rael Dayanagan, an author of Bodyo Okay Ito Tagum, said a colleague of Dayanagan's, said rescuers were purging hard that she would be found alive.

Bruno Supt. Ronald de la Rosa, Compostela Valley police director, expressed an honest rescue operation day-sparing him as saying that Angeles's body had been recovered last Sunday.

Aside from Angeles, De la Rosa

ANGELES Angeles, wife of Manuvo village chair Jovencio Angeles, is in shock after learning that her house was inundated by a landslide in Manuvo, Maco town, in Compostela Valley province.

identified the other bodies recovered yesterday as those of Federico Ilomania, Eugene Presilla, Rubenia Tagisa, Norman Subgao Jr. and a certain Gabo.

De la Rosa said the following were still missing: taxpayer's two children and a grandchild, Medes Gimbenga, Joel Cosio, Nordecio Manatad, Teodoro Ibañez, Rolando Manilisa, Reinaldo Cacnio, Joe Sabalan and Ryan Hapia.

Authorities earlier identified those killed in the two landslides as Gerlyn Mandilo, 30; Rosemarie Lalim, 29, and her daughters Ma. Cristine, 5, and Ma. Teresa, 2; Evelyn Bellano, 8; Ronald Bandino, 33; Aaron Cerabino Peralada, 9; and an unidentified security guard.

The Manguyon town in their house when the first landslide struck at around 3:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Signs

Rosemarie said she had felt "signs," including "smoke" from the mountainside that spotted shortly after and ground movements and rumbling noise.

"I'm thankful that we made it alive, but what will happen to us after this?" she asked, watching from the porch of a relative's house owned by the landslide, as neighbors and other residents gathered belongings and prepared for evacuation.

Antonio Cloma, operations officer of the Office of Civil Defense in Southern Mindanao, said that almost 1,000 residents of the total 7,000 population of Manuvo were living in the portion of the village that was struck by two landslides that happened 12 hours apart.

A total of 293 families from the village were staying at the Manuvo Chapel, Manuvo Elementary School, the Bladdo Gym, and the Bladdo Elementary School which have been converted into evacuation centers.

Forced evacuation

About 5,000 Manuvo villagers were reported to troop to two public schools in Barangay Bladdo in Manuvo town become local officials had ordered a forced evacuation, said Elizabeth Uy, municipal social welfare officer.

Provincial Secretary Gilberto Teodoro has ordered the release of 800 to families in the evacuation centers.

Uy said that small landslides brought by continuous rain blocked the roads leading to Manuvo proper and that fearing people may leave could be cut off.

She said residences in Manuvo, the village immediately below Manuvo, were also ordered to evacuate to Bladdo.

Rescue efforts are hampered by the sudden downpour and the constant threats of another landslide.

Cloma said that the search and retrieval operations in the village could take at least three more days.

Landslides and flash floods are common in the Philippines during the monsoon months between May and October, particularly near mining areas, low-lying and coastal areas. With reports from Dennis Aquino, Inquirer Mindanao, and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. 1
Series of 2008

SUBJECT : GUIDELINES RELATIVE TO THE SUPREME COURT RULING ON THE SUTTING CASE REGARDING LANDS WHICH ARE ACTUALLY, DIRECTLY AND EXCLUSIVELY USED FOR LIVESTOCK RAISING

The Supreme Court of the Philippines declared in the case entitled "Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) versus Dante T. Sutton, et. al. (G.R. No. 160057, 19 October 2007) that the DAR has no authority to regulate livestock farms which have been exempted by the Constitution from the coverage of agrarian reform.

The Supreme Court's decision in the above-cited case was based on the appreciation of the intent of the framers of the Constitution relative to livestock raising lands, etc., as shown in the following statements/quote from the text of the decision: "the deliberations of the 1987 Constitutional Commission show a clear intent to exclude, inter-alia, all lands exclusively devoted to livestock, swine and poultry raising". Clearly, the Supreme Court declared mentioned 'exclusively' of use as a requisite for land devoted to livestock, poultry and swine raising to be deemed excluded from the coverage of CARP.

To guide the Department in the coverage of agricultural lands under CARP based on the above-cited Supreme Court decision, the following policy guidelines are hereby issued:

1. Private agricultural lands or portions thereof actually, directly and exclusively used for livestock purposes other than agricultural like cattle raising as of 15 June 1988 and continuously and actually used for such purposes up to the present, within the limit of inventory as provided under Item 3 of this Order, shall be excluded from CARP coverage.
2. Conversely, landholdings or any portions thereof not actually, directly and exclusively used for livestock raising are subject to CARP coverage if one or more of the following conditions exist:
   2.1 There is agricultural activity in the area, i.e., cultivation of the soil, planting of crops, growing of fruit trees, including the harvesting of such products, and other farm activities and practices, whether done by a natural or juridical person and regardless of the final use or destination of such agricultural products; and/or
   2.2 The land is suitable for agriculture and it is presently occupied and tilled by farmers.
3. The Municipal Agrarian Reform Officer (MARO), together with a representative of the DAR Provincial Office (DARPO), shall conduct an inventory and ocular inspection of all agriculture lands with livestock operations.
4. A report on the inventoried and inspected lands with the following information shall be submitted by the MARO and the DARPO representative to the Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer (PARO):
   - Name of landowner;
   - Location of property, title number and area;
   - Actual land use;
   - Existence of agricultural activity;
   - Type of animals raised and/or agricultural commodities produced; and,
   - Other information vital to the determination of coverage of the land or portions thereof under CARP.
5. In case any of the conditions under Items 2.1 and 2.2 of these guidelines are evident, the MARO, in coordination with the respective Barangay Agrarian Reform Committee (BARC), shall conduct an investigation and inform the landowner beforehand.
6. Pursuant to DAR Administrative Order (A.O.) No. 04, Series of 2003, the landowner has thirty (30) days from receipt of the Notice of Coverage within which to file protest on the coverage. He shall be given another thirty (30) days from date of the filing thereof within which to present evidence or documents with probative value to support his protest.
7. The conversion of lands covered by this Order to other uses in violation of the existing landholding coverage guidelines shall be governed by DAR A.O. No. 20, Series of 2002 entitled "2002 Rules for Agrarian Law Implementation Cases".
8. Any act of a landowner to change or convert his/her agricultural land for livestock raising shall not affect the coverage of his/her landholding under CARP any diversification or change in the agricultural use of the landholding, as well as from crop production to livestock raising shall be subject to the same requirements and said conversion.
9. In line with the authority to regularly in the performance of mandated and official functions, all processes undertaken by DAR pursuant to A.O. No. 06, Series of 1993 and A.O. No. 1, Series of 2004 are valid. Accordingly, the 5-ha or 15-ha award to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) for each lands likewise remain valid.
10. Any petition to nullify this coverage of land shall be under CARP section 57(k) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42)

NEWS

Power is felt, not used, Imelda tells adoring studes

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—FORMER FIRST LADY IMELDA Marcos said "power is felt, but never used," when she addressed the country's student leaders on Monday during a training conference for student government officers at Teachers Camp here.

Marcos was cuddled and swooned like a movie star by conference participants and their teachers.

Last week, militant teachers and student groups criticized conference organizers for planning to honor her at the conference.

Although she played most of her speech for laughs during the National Leadership Training for Student Government Officers, Marcos gave the students pointers on managing power should they aspire in political careers.

In her speech, she said her husband, the late strongman President Marcos, taught her that power is "like a gas tank: a thousand miles that must never be fired."

Triggering that gas, she said, means a team loses control of his authority.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus had said the decision to invite Marcos to the conference was non-negotiable.

Marcos was received here by Jerry Pelaez, executive director of the Department of Education's Center for Students and Co-Curricular Affairs.

Many participants had booked audited Marcos and amped their mobile phones and digital cameras at her as she alighted from a van.

When her entourage of security vehicles started to exit about two hours later, the students again mobbed her vehicle.

They pleaded with the driver to lower the windows so they could take more photographs of the 78-year-old widow. Marcos obliged.

Resource speakers on her notoriety as "Imeldific controversy girl" and her unifying "consistency on God, country and love," Marcos circulated generic moral officials who did not know how to use power.

Marcos said all of the hospitals and hotels she built as first lady and minister of human settlements did not cost the government a centavo.

She said all she had to do was use her influence to persuade businessmen to bankroll the projects.

She said it was this kind of power that helped her husband make the decision that prevented the country from the effects of the Cold War-era conflicts of the United States, China and the Soviet Union.

She said the Philippines was the "center of the world" because it had a strategic military location, situated between the US and China.

The backdrop of the Teachers Camp building where Mrs. Marcos spoke was adorned with photos of her trip to China.

Imelda, Imee miss court date in Tan case

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FORMER FIRST LADY IMELDA MARCOS and her daughter, Imee Marcos, were a no-show at the Sandiganbayan antigraft court yesterday.

The Marcoses were expected to appear before the antigraft court's Fifth Division yesterday to back government claims that 46 percent of business tycoon Lucio Tan's corporate holdings belonged to the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

But executive Candaleon Granzella of the Presidential Commission on Good Government informed the court the summonses sent to the two Marcoses were not "duly served" by the court sheriff.

In the absence of the Marcoses, Granzella called to the stand the records custodian of the Senate blue ribbon committee, Amor Aragon, to present the official transcript of an inquiry interview with Mrs Marcos in 1999 where she said that the shares of stock held by Tan were her late husband's.

"By presenting the transcripts, it's just like Mrs. Marcos testifying in court vicariously," Granzella told the inquirer in an interview.

He, however, said the PCGG would still subpoena the Marcoses to appear at the next hearing of Bona Dano-Sep. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., who testified in August last year that Tan had even promised to help him learn how to run the businesses and also gave him a tour of some of the firms.

"We will still ask her to testify not because our case is weak but to make sure that there are no loopholes in our case," he said.

"We want all the issues to surround the debates from capitalizing on the absence of Mrs. Marcos," he added.

The former first lady was subpoenaed twice to date but failed to appear, with the first summons sent to the wrong address. She had to postpone her appearance on June 4 because she was sick.

The Marcoses story, which triggered a Senate inquiry after its publication on Oct. 9, 1998, elaborated on claims by Mrs. Marcos that the late strongman had given her money to invest in Tan's companies "and make them big so employ many people."

According to Mrs. Marcos in the interview, Fortune Tobacco Corp., Allied Banking Corp., Asia Brewery Inc., Fortunet Dana Inc. and the flagship company Shareholdings Inc., were among the big companies held by Tan for Marcos.

No way to study

SECOND GRADER CESAR SINGSAR, 8, a first-honor student according to his mother, does his homework on a busy Manila sidewalk on Monday. According to the government, one in six school-age children in the country is deprived of an education and the number is steadily rising. In a study the National Statistical Coordination Board said the percentage of children enrolled in primary school went down to 83 percent in the 2006-07 school year from 90 percent five years earlier. The numbers are even worse for secondary education at 59 percent, although they have been steady for over five years, it said. The data "indicate the country is still far from achieving its goal of providing a basic education for all," it further said. AFP PHOTO

Aplus METRO
Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

Free Louie now, asks Gonzalez lawyer

Accused still held by NBI; Delgado counsel says CA decision not final

By Allison W. Lopez

BUSINESSMAN LUISITO "Louie" Gonzalez, who has been accused of killing his stepbrother, Federico "Rico" Delgado, will remain in the custody of the National Bureau of Investigation until a judge has ruled on a motion filed by his lawyer seeking his immediate release.

At a hearing held yesterday before Judge Thelma Bunyi-Medina of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 32, Gonzalez's lawyer, Emilio Mendoza, argued that his client should be set free following the Court of Appeals' dismissal last week of the murder charge filed against the latter and his concubine, Antonio Buenaflor, his driver.

Both Gonzalez and Buenaflor were present in the hearing. Gonzalez was brought in the court by NBI agents while Buenaflor came from the Manila City Jail where he is being held.

"A court cannot act without the case before it. It is a criminal proceeding, when courts a case in the filing of an information. Without this, the court cannot take a motion of arrest," said Mendoza.

"How the information on this case has been nullified by the CA, by the court no longer has jurisdiction that situation, it has no alternative but to recall the motion of arrest and to order the release of the accused," he added.

Mendoza argued that the lower court has "lost jurisdiction" over the case and ever the accused because it does not have a "case" as a result of the appellate court's ruling.

Last week, the Court of Appeals' seventh division reversed the findings of then acting Judge Severino Agnes Hernandez that there was probable cause to indict Gonzalez and Buenaflor for Delgado's murder but not Mendoza reversed the appellate court had used the word "impossible" to describe the improbable if was for the suspects to have killed Delgado.

LUISITO Gonzalez (center), who is accused of killing his stepbrother, is flanked by National Bureau of Investigation agents when he showed up for his hearing in a Manila courthouse yesterday. EDDIE M.

ANTONIO Buenaflor, Gonzalez's codefendant.

The lawyer representing the Delgado family, however, argued that the appellate court's decision was not yet "final and executory" since they still had less than 15 days to file a motion for reconsideration or the appellate court or a petition for review at the Supreme Court.

"We maintain that the decision is not final and our filing of the motion clearly suspends it. Let's wait until this is resolved," lawyer Gabriel Bulayog said.

Judge Medina, meanwhile, said that she would rule on the motion filed by Go Johnson within 90 days.

The pair were charged after a witness identified them as the men who broke into the victim's apartment and stabbed him to death on May 30, 2007.

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Geo Estate

Bank official shot dead in Pasay City robbery

By Julie M. Aurelio

A RURAL BANK OFFICIAL WAS shot dead by robbers who took the money he had just rounded in a bank in Pasay City yesterday morning.

Apolinar Ayos, an officer of the Mandaluyong Rural Bank on Gedenga-Kotse Road in Barangay 183 in Pasay City, died of a bullet wound in the head and neck in the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Pasay City.

He was first reported to be in critical condition but died later in the afternoon while undergoing treatment.

Senior Supt. Marietta Valerio, city chief of police, said at least three armed men on a motorcycle blocked Ayos' path as he was walking back to his bank at around 9:45 a.m. yesterday.

An initial investigation showed that the victim had just come from the Metrobank branch on Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City where he withdrew a check for P600,000.

"He left his car in a parking lot behind the Metrobank branch and apparently decided to walk back to the bank," Valerio said the hoodlums.

While walking in front of the Diplomat Building on the service road, Ayos was approached by the three motorcycle-riding men.

As gunmen, they demanded that he give them a black paper bag that contained the money.

"Ayos refused. He fought back, then the men shot him using a .45 caliber," Valerio said.

The robbers immediately sped away in the direction of Roxas Boulevard after shooting the victim.

A parking attendant saw the incident and part of the motorcycle's plate number that she reported to the police.

NCRPO chief Director Geary Barias (seated, left) and QCPD head Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gacilo present four robbery suspects who were arrested after fleeing from a police checkpoint on Sunday night.

9 members of Makati police suspended

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE MAKATI CITY POLICE TESTIfied yesterday night of the nine members of the Makati police force who have been placed on preventive suspension for robbery and extortion along with their superior.

Senior Supt. Gilbert Cruz, head of the Makati police, identified the eight as PO1s Michelle Oliveria, Michael Anders, Percival Mendoza, Jaime Deante Jr., PO2s Florencio Cruz Jr., Julius Lapa, Ronie Ambrosio and PO3 Ernesto Bala.

The eight are operatives of the Makati police's Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force.

They were ordered suspended for 90 days—effective on Sept. 5—along with the head of the task force, Chief Insp. Arvee Nacional, who was arrested on Aug. 29 in an entrapment operation conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation.

"The pre-charge investigation against them is ongoing. We have also dismissed the rest of their service firearms," Cruz said in a text message to the Inquirer.

Nacional and his men were accused by four women of inventing them illegally threatening to kill them and forcing them to pay P300,000 in exchange for their freedom.

The women—the victims—who were identified as Lyn Abito, Mich Abreo, Joanna Mabalot and Ruby Bernardo—said that the policemen forced their way into their house in Barangay West Rembo, Makati City on Aug. 27.

This policeman allegedly stole the women's valuables, accused them of using drugs and then herded them in their office where they were detained overnight.

They were released the next day after nine of the victims came up with P350,000 more to free her boyfriend.

Nacional, however, allegedly wanted the victims to pay the balance of P47,000. He told one of the women to meet him at a gasoline station in Makati City for the payoff.

The victims sought help from the National Bureau of Investigation which set up an entrapment operation, leading to Nacional's arrest on Aug. 29. The eight other policemen were identified by the four women through the photos. Only Nacional, however, has been charged so far in a Makati court with robbery-extortion.

4 men posing as gov't workers nabbed with assorted weapons

By Jeannette I. Andrade

OPERATIVES OF THE QUEZON CITY POlice District foiled an Sunday an alleged plan by a group of masquerading government workers to rob a banker in a village in Quezon City.

QCPD director Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gacilo said his men arrested Apolito Calcetas, 39, a taxi driver; Arvin Pineda, 27; Renato Sudarcio, 33 and Jaymar Bigcolo, 28, who were wearing T-shirts with Department of Public Order and Safety markings. The DPOS is one of the departments at Quezon City Hall.

Gacilo said the men were in Caloocan's taxi (PBD 998) when they approached a police team of agents from the QCPD district-mapping (Anti-Unit and District Mobile Force) manning a checkpoint on Mindanao Avenue at around 8:30 p.m. Sunday.

Instead of stopping at the checkpoint, Calcetas stepped on the gas, prompting the police men to give chase.

The four men were cornered near the corner of Congressional Avenue in Project 6. They yielded a fragmentation grenade, two caliber .38 revolvers, ammunition, a fake badge, an ice pick, two pairs of gloves, a roll of packaging tape and rubber mask.

DPOS security and intelligence director chief Manny Semana told reporters that the group could have been planning to rob a money lender who lives in nearby Kinoo Village. He said that the raider's usual clients are DPOS employees and workers from other departments at City Hall.

What's wrong with an ally helping a friend?

ON TARGET
EARNON ZABLAN

CRITICS ARE TRYING TO KILL the goose that lays the golden eggs in questioning the duty of US forces in Mindanao.

One such critic, Prof. Octavio Dinampo of the Mindanao State University (MSU), a Muslim, said a US spy plane gave directions to Filipino troops on the ground before they launched a down Mom Ishmir Ulimerun from [illegible] rebels.

So, what's wrong with an ally helping to fight rebels?

William Simmons, military and financial aid, chose Abu Sayyaf bandits, who raped and murdered missionaries, would still be roaming around free.

As, Christian Jolla, get real!

Our inefficient and ill-equipped military wouldn't have done an excellent job of capturing and killing those bandits without the backing of US forces.

• • •

So, what are the critics of the Americans trumped up to?

They want to drive away the Americans so that rebels can run riot over our soldiers who are suffering from low morale.

(If Filipino troops are very demoralized, but that's another story.)

Look at the names of the critics of American troops: Most of them are of Mindanao origin.

• • •

We should be thankful the Americans are helping us fight terrorists allegedly supported and funded by al-Qaida.

Let's not be piratical about the whole thing. We need the assistance more than they need us.

• • •

So, what's wrong with Lake "Thanie" Magnon being appointed deputy national security adviser?

Let's give the guy a chance to prove his worth.

Magnon has native intelligence, which is more than some Americans have in intelligence.

I've seen the former Bicos far governor up close and personal, and I can say without hesitating an eyelash he's more intelligent than some of our Cabinet members and senators.

• • •

What's wrong with prim-and-proper Jose and Pampanga Gov. Ed Panlilio?

"It is my impression that this man of the cloth brought to his positions not just good intentions but also an insidious form of moral righteousness that mixed him more for a second-coming type of crusade than for politics as we ordinarily understand it—i.e. the art of compromise. This mixed our motives over the unhealthy front over the issues of opposition as an arena in which to wage war against evil, rather than as an invitation to find common ground. This is the worst attitude one can ever bring into politics."

These words are not mine. They belong to a fellow columnist, Randy David, an ardent supporter of Bedillo, who never chose in his column, Public Lives, last Saturday.

So, again, what's wrong with Panlilio?

He announced his "vision and honor" governance in such a way that other Pampanga politicians were made to appear like they're all crooks.

There's no doubt he's clean and honest. But so was President Cory Aquino who had to fight seven coup attempts.

Panlilio is in danger of being booted out of office through a recall election because of his "holier than thou" attitude.

• • •

To many Kapampangans who know him very well, Panlilio reminds them of the Pharisees in the time of Jesus.

A barbaker who was Panlilio's former parishioner told me the priest-turned-politician once fell into temptation on a morality aspect.

And then former parishioner said Panlilio could not account for the money given to Pinatubo victims entrusted to him by a nongovernment organization.

Is that true, Bullets, er, Governor?

• • •

Thought for today:

When you point a finger at your neighbor, three other fingers are pointing back at you.

In short, nobody's perfect... not even Panlilio.

MMDA chair a no-show at QC council session

By Marlon Ramos

A QUEZON CITY COUNCILOR YESterday vowed to declare Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando persona non grata if he continued his disdain for the council in defiance of yesterday's session.

The 25-member council, however, deferred acting on the resolution filed by Councilor Jonel Nograles after Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista asked them to give Fernando another chance by sending him to their next session.

Authoring the resolution, the City Council's 5th district lawmaker's move came as Fernando's no-appearance. The MMDA chair did not send any representative to the meeting.

The council earlier invited Fernando to give him a chance to explain his stand on several issues, among them the ban imposed by the MMDA on tricycles plying Kamuning Avenue and demolition operations carried out by MMDA personnel in Bulacan and Novaliches.

Reuben earlier complained that these were carried out without any consultation with the city government. He even threatened to cut off water supply to the premises of the MMDA if Fernando continued to disregard local policies on traffic management and informal settlers.

Bautista said that although he personally respected Fernando's decision not to attend yesterday's session, the council felt bad about the MMDA chair's incompetence.

The lucrative email to contact Fernando but was told by a staffer, Lolit de Guzman, that he was in a closed door meeting.

"I think we received an invitation last Friday from Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista. But I have to check if that was the invitation [to the council session]... So far the previous ones [e-]received, the chairman has not yet seen that," De Guzman said.

Councilor Victor Sotto Jr., meanwhile, said declaring Fernando's persona non grata could help them prevent the MMDA from arbitrarily instituting traffic policies without consultation with the city government.

He also criticized the officials for putting up U-turn slots and concrete barriers on Commonwealth Avenue without ensuring the safety of motorists, saying the structures only led to vehicular accidents in the area.

"Fernando is acting as if he is the mayor of Quezon City. He has to be tamed. He has been disrespectful to [the council]. He has been hard to [reach]. He has been hard to be here," Forte said.

With Aella M. Aurelio

6 suspected scalpers nabbed by NBI in QC

By Allison W. Lopez

SIX ALLEGED SCALPERS INCLUDING AN employee of the University of the Philippines were arrested by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in an entrapment operation at Araneta Coliseum, Quezon City on Saturday for selling overpriced tickets to the Dave Matthews Band concert.

The NBI-Special Task Force led by Atty. Ruben Sangalang, a security guard, Arnel Mangalindan, Lito Ong-Siew, Mark Yosores and Elias Ortua as they sold highly priced tickets to the concert at the ground gate of the La Salle Green Archers against the Ateneo Blue Eagles, and prior to that, the University of Santo Tomas Tigers-University of the Philippines-Maroons game.

The suspects allegedly peddled upper box A tickets, priced at P350, to the posse-buyers for P1,000, while upper box B tickets that usually cost P575 went up to P700. Orchestra seats priced at P250 were jacked up from P3,000 up, said Dabanginan. Forty-one tickets were confiscated from the suspects, including those for a three dancing competition.

The suspects were charged yesterday with violation of Quezon City ordinance no. SP-493, S-97 or the Anti-Scalping Law at the QC Prosecutor's Office, and remain at the NBI jail.

Undersecretary and acting chief of Justice Gilbonia, had asked the help of the NBI in a letter to NBI Director Nestor Mantaring on Sept. 3 to halt the illegal operations.

He added that they received information that the suspects were financed by a "small group of policemen assigned in Quezon City." Dabanginan said the suspects could not operate on a regular basis, but he said further investigation would be conducted to pinpoint the masterminds.

MetroBriefs

Fire hits Cainta paint shop, leads to fireman's death

AT 10-YEAR-OLD fireman died Sunday night while fighting a fire that broke out in a paint shop in the town of Cainta in Rizal province. The Bureau of Fire in Cainta identified Pat Levino as Junior Rescue, a resident of 114 Barangay St. Felipe in San Juan. Rescue Manila was one of the firetrucks who responded when a fire hit the 911 Paint Center and General Merchandising on Imelda Avenue, Barangay San Isidro. He reportedly suffered a heart attack but co-workers believed was triggered by the heavy smoke from chemicals in the paint shop. They attempted to resuscitate Rescue but he died at Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Muntinlupa City. The victim left behind his wife and three children. The fire, that reached the third alarm, was reported at 7:40 p.m. Sunday and was declared under control at 9 p.m. It was finally placed under control at 11:45 p.m.

Beverly T. Kalaw

Homeowners reject water system fee

RESIDENTS OF A SUBDIVISION IN side Barangay BF Homes in Parañaque City have asked the head of a government agency not to allow Maynilad Water Services Inc. to pass on to them the cost of building a water distribution system in the area.

The request was contained in a letter addressed to Metropolitan Water and Sewerage System Administrator Diosdado Jose Allado dated Sep. 26.

It was signed by Antonio Trono, chair of the BF Parañaque Homeowners Association Inc.'s water committee.

"The solution to our water problem is almost at hand but we feel it is being rushed mostly because of the Interim Maynilad Water would like us to bear," he said in the letter.

According to the group, Maynilad had asked them to reimburse the cost it would incur in connecting the water distribution system in 36 remotely located units.

The system of the initial 14 residences comprising Phase 1, the monthly installment ranges from P2,200 to P2,300 per month, excluding the cost of the monthly water consumption, the P6,377.22 one-time connection fee and the one-time charge for flushing prior to interconnection," the letter said.

No payment

In their letter, the BFHAI noted that the MWSS had installed main water pipes on El Grande, Aguirre and Presidente Avenues, but the residents were not asked to pay for their installation and maintenance.

It added that other gated subdivisions such as Tierra Village in Las Piñas City and Annex Hills residence in Better Living, Parañaque City also had their water system rehabilitated but the main units were not passed on to consumers.

"Our lawyers have perused the MWSS Charter and the Concession Agreement but they have not found a provision that specifically authorizes MWSS or its concessionaires to pass on to its consumers the cost of building a water distribution system," the BFHAI pointed out.

What was only required, the group added, was for the homeowner to pay a one-time connection fee to be hooked up to the water main pipe.

Aella M. Aurelio

Did you know

ACCORDING to the Philippine National Police, of the 20 killings for various incidents recorded nationwide in 2008, 10 took place in Metro Manila, Central Luzon and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao reported four cases, each while only one each occurred in the Ilocos region, Central Visayas, Western Mindanao and Northern Mindanao.

Elha Nikko B. Inquirer Research

China, Japan hail US bailout of Fannie, Freddie

TOKYO—CHINA AND JAPAN, the biggest buyers of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae bonds, praised Washington for its rescue of the ailing mortgage giants, but investors hardened expectations that the bailout would shield the global credit market misery.

As battered financial stocks rebled and investors moved out of cash and safe-haven bonds, analysts cautioned that the bailout announced on Sunday was more a sign of the problem state of the global financial system than of an imminent recovery.

"We find it difficult to see how it is bullish that the heavy hand of government is needed to such an extent," Ichiroff Lynch economist David Rosenberg said.

"In our view, the takeover of Fannie and Freddie is partly a recognition of how broken the financial system is at this time."

China and Japan, the largest and the second-biggest holders of the US lenders' debt securities welcomed the US government's action as good news for investors and the world economy.

"I think it will have a positive impact on the world economy as it eases worries over the US economy through more stable financial markets in the United States," Finance Minister Fumio Kyuma told reporters.

Japan's policymakers also steps as it removes one unstable factor in the United States, especially because the dollar is a key international currency."

US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson would explain the details of the rescue to the Group of Seven economic powers, including Japan, on Monday evening, he said.

US stocks futures and Asian and European share markets soared after the news of the takeover that could become the costliest US bailout ever.

China's central bank governor Zhou Xiaochuan struck a similar positive note.

"Different people may have different responses. From my point of view this is positive," he said.

According to US Treasury data, China was the biggest US agency bond holder with $376 billion as of mid-2007, and Japan the second biggest with $239 billion of such debt.

Australia, which in contrast has little exposure to the US agency debt, also highlighted the move's soothing impact on world markets.

"Obviously I think that is a step they had to take. It's good that they've done it," Reserve Bank of Australia Governor Glenn Stevens said.

Share markets soared after the US government seized control of the two institutions on Sunday removing one big source of anxiety that has been lowering markets for more than a year now and helped push several major economies to send recession.

But fund managers were quick to point out that a risk of collapse of US dominant mortgage lenders and a lowering market meltdown was just one of the threats looming large over financial markets and the world economy.

"What you have is the US government not putting in immediate cash, but putting in credibility on the line. It's a tremendous help, but it doesn't solve all the problems," said Henri Bennett, a fund manager at Aberdeen Asset Management in Singapore.

"This news will likely be displaced going forward by other credit negative news. I still remain cautious," he added.

US government debt prices fell, reflecting market caution about longer-term consequences of the rescue—in particular the increased exposure of the US Treasury in risky assets and possible greater debt burden. The dollar gained against the yen, but lost against the euro and several other currencies.

The Treasury took $1 billion in preferred senior stock in each company, but its equity stake could reach as much as $100 billion in each.

Freddie Mac shares tumbled more than 80 percent to French Hall when trading began on Monday. Freddie and Fannie, which serve a government mission to support housing, were put in a conservatorship that allows their stock to be valued causing low price common shareholders less in how in any claims.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which own or guarantee almost half of the country's $12 trillion in outstanding home mortgage debt, were so large that "a failure of either of them would cause great turmoil in our financial markets here at home and around the globe," Paulson said.

The action was the latest in a series of emergency steps taken by US authorities to contain the fallout from the housing sector downturn that has pushed many major economies toward recession. Reuters

Israeli police recommend criminal charges against Olmert

JERUSALEM—POLICE RECOMMENDED on Monday criminal charges be filed against Ehud Olmert dealt yet another harsh blow to the Israeli premier whose government has been battered by the corruption allegations.

While a final decision is not expected for weeks or even months, the Israeli media almost unanimous in declaring that the police move marks the end of the Olmert era.

Olmert's government is already hobbled by mounting internal divisions that could prevent it from making any significant decisions in its last-ditch peace talks with the Palestinians or indirect negotiations with Syria.

"Olmert is a dead horse. Occasionally he still kicks but his kicks are weak," the left-leaning Haaretz newspaper said in an editorial.

Ofir Pinchas Olmert failed to convince his Cabinet to discuss a plan to compensate Jewish settlers who agree to relocate from the occupied West Bank to Israel as part of a future peace agreement with the Palestinians.

The presence of more than 260,000 settlers in the West Bank is seen as one of the main hurdles in the peace negotiations, which broke down after Palestinian militants were infuriated at a US-hosted conference in November.

The premier, who turns 63 at the end of September, has denied any wrongdoing but announced in July he would step down following a public uproar over the array of corruption against him.

Olmert's lawyers have dismissed the police report as "meaningless," pointing out that only the attorney general can decide whether to indict, a decision that could be weeks if not months away.

And the premier's media adviser Assaf Dan pointed out the attorney general had to the point ignored police recommendations to indict suspects—Israeli Shimon Peres and ex-prime minister Ariel Sharon.

Police said they had gathered enough evidence to indict Olmert on charges of taking bribes and breach of public trust for allegedly accepting tens of thousands of dollars of illegal funds from a US business man.

Police also recommended that Olmert be indicted over suspicions he had billed the same overseas trips several times over, allegedly using the ill-gotten gains to pay for private trips for himself and his family.

The allegations only surfaced earlier this year but concern events that took place in the 15 years before Olmert took office in 2006, when he served as minister of industry and as trade and industry minister.

State prosecutors will now review the evidence and make their own recommendation.

Police said they would need to question Olmert further before deciding whether to recommend a third indictment over suspicions of corruption in political appointments he made as minister in 2005. AFP

HURRICANE "Ike" blows through the trees on the island of Providenciales, in the Turks & Caicos Islands, on Sept. 7. The reserved across the islands before dawn, forcing people in the British territory to seek refuge in emergency shelters or in their homes. —

'Ike' slams Cuba; Haiti death toll hits 600

HAVANA—HURRICANE "IKE" RAGED over Cuba early Monday pummeling the island with gale force winds and torrential rain after killing dozens in battered Haiti and worsening its growing humanitarian disaster.

The second hurricane to strike in less than a week prompted more than 800,000 people to evacuate coastal areas of eastern Cuba. More than 9,000 foreign tourists were moved out of the resort of Varadero.

The hurricane made landfall as Punta Lucrecia late Sunday, the head of Cuba's meteorological service, Jose Rubiera, told state television.

Packing 135-kilometer per hour winds, Ike is the second powerful storm in just eight days to strike Cuba, following Hurricane "Gustav."

"In all of Cuba's history, we have never had two hurricanes this close together," lamented Rubiera.

Just before dawn, the eye of storm was practically over Cabo Lucrecia on the northern coast of eastern Cuba, about 220 km east of Camaguey and moving west, according to the US National Hurricane Center which said it was a Category Three storm on a scale going up to five.

The powerful storm hit the Turks and Caicos as a powerful Category four storm late Saturday, causing injuries and extensive damage on the British territory and incite homes, before weakening.

The hurricane raked the Bahamas islands of Great Inagua, toppling trees, blowing off roofs, causing an island-wide power failure and forcing many of its 1,000 to seek emergency refuges.

The main concern is now in Haiti, where four storms in three weeks have killed at least 600 people and left hundreds of thousands in desperate need of food, clean water and shelter.

Officials continued aid operations in the flood-stricken town of Gonaives, devastated by flooding from Tropical Storm "Hanna." Another 17 people perished in the village of Cabaret, near Port-au-Prince, to flooding caused by Ike, officials said.

Hundreds of bodies were found in Gonaives, a town of 300,000 in northwestern Haiti, after a five-meter (16-foot) wall of water and mud engulfed much of the town.

UN peacekeepers on Saturday evacuated several thousand residents from Gonaives, a local official said, but thousands more were still awaiting relief.

Some 600,000 Haitians have been affected by the flooding, including 300,000 children, and the task of delivering crucial aid has been complicated by dismal transport conditions, according to the UN Children's Fund (Unicef). Officials said 200,000 people were without food and clean water, many for four days. AFP

US drones hit Taliban leader's base in Pakistan

MIRANSHAH, PAKISTAN—MISsiles fired by US drone aircraft killed at least three people on Monday in a Pakistani village near the Afghan border where a religious school founded by an old friend of Osama bin Laden is located, witnesses said.

"There were two drones and they fired three missiles," said a resident of Datah Sarpakhel, a village near Miranshah, main town of the North Waziristan tribal region.

A military official said a house and vehicles belonged to Taliban commander Jalaluddin Haqqani was the target of the attack.

The residents said three people had been killed in the attack while doctors said 15 to 20 were wounded, most of them women and children.

Haqqani's younger son said his father and son Sirajuddin had been away from the house at the time.

"Haqqani and Sirajuddin were in Afghanistan at the time of the attack. They are alive," Badruddin, the commander's third son, said by telephone.

Haqqani is a veteran commander who fought the Soviet-backed Afghan war against Soviet occupation in the 1970s and 1980s.

He also has had close links with Pakistani intelligence agencies, notably the military Inter-services Intelligence (ISI).

The New York Times reported in July that the US Central Intelligence Agency had given Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani evidence of the ISI's involvement with Haqqani along with evidence of ISI connections in a suicide bombing at the Indian Embassy in Kabul that killed nearly 60 people on July 7. Reuters

Boeing strike threatens global aerospace industry

EVERETT, WASHINGTON/NEW YORK—Boeing Co's 27,000 machinists prepared for a third day of strike action, holding pickets at the plant maker's Seattle-area plants in protest at Boeing's contract offer and vowed they are in place to shift more jobs to non-union and foreign companies.

The fourth strike in 20 years by Boeing's biggest union threatens to cost the company $100 million a day in revenue and is likely to cause problems for a long list of suppliers across the world in an increasingly global aerospace business.

On Sunday, about 15 pickets rallied about the main entrance to Boeing's Everett, Washington, plant, which usually employs 15,000 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM).

"It's not about the money. It's all about the subcontracting wordage," said picketer Randy Blessin, a 53-year-old motor equipment operator. Subcontracting was sudden to fellow workers. "My job is one they could possibly offload to a subcontractor."

The IAM, whose members call themselves the "Fighting Machinists," is looking for higher pay and better benefits from Boeing, but is particularly worried about language put in the contract in 2002, when there were woes in the aerospace industry, which gave Boeing the power to use outside companies for work usually done by IAM members.

Boeing took advantage of that to subject its base of suppliers for its newest plane, the 787 Dreamliner, which is being made by companies around the world and only assembled in Everett. The union says Boeing has got rid of 10,000 IAM members since 1990 with the progressive increase in outsourcing.

"We understand our jobs are going away," said John Jorgensen, 62, a final assembly mechanic who has worked at Boeing for 43 years. "If we don't get subcontracting [language protection [sic]], we'll never get it."

The result of outsourcing, especially on the 787, means the effect of the stoppage will be felt around the world, piling up inventories and putting pressure on Asian and European suppliers responsible for much of the main body of Boeing's newest aircraft. Reuters

CERN set to fire up new atom smasher to near Big Bang

GENEVA—IT WAS BEEN called an Alice in Wonderland investigation, with the mysteries of the universe—or dangerous tampering with nature that could spell doomsday.

Whatever the case, the most powerful atom-smasher ever built comes online on Wednesday, eagerly anticipated by scientists everywhere who have swept aside measure for ten decades.

The multibillion-dollar Large Hadron Collider will explore the tiniest particles and come ever closer to recreating the Big Bang, the theory that a colossal explosion created the universe.

It also has the potential, critics of the universe—or dangerous tampering with nature that could spell doomsday.

Whatever the case, the most powerful atom-smasher ever built comes online on Wednesday, eagerly anticipated by scientists everywhere who have swept aside measure for ten decades.

The multibillion-dollar Large Hadron Collider will explore the tiniest particles and come ever closer to recreating the Big Bang, the theory that a colossal explosion created the universe.

It also has the potential, critics say, to create mini "black holes" and endanger the planet.

The project has attracted researchers of 85 nationalities, some 1,200 of them from the United States, which contributed $531 million of the project's price tag of nearly $4 billion.

"This only happens once a generation," said Rolf Heuer, spokesperson for the US contingent at the CERN project. "People are certainly very excited."

The collider at Frenchal outside Chicago also could host CERN to some discoveries, but the Geneva equipment, generating seven times more energy than Fermilab, will give it big advantages.

The CERN collider is designed to push the protons beam close to the speed of light, whizzing 11,000 times a second around the tunnel 16 meters to 150 meters under the bucolic countryside on the French-Swiss border.

Once the beam is successfully in opposite directions are brought together to collide. Huge detectors then record what happens in those collisions.

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Once the beam is successfully in opposite directions are brought together to collide. Huge detectors then record what happens in those collisions.

Physicists will also be looking for evidence of the Higgs boson, a theoretical particle that is thought to explain why matter has mass.

Without it, the universe would be a very different place, with no stars, planets or life.

Some critics have raised fears that the collider could create a black hole that would destroy the Earth.

Others have suggested that it could unleash a form of matter that would transform the planet into a hard, dense ball.

Scientists have dismissed such fears as groundless, pointing out that cosmic rays far stronger than anything the collider can produce have been hitting the Earth for billions of years.

Nevertheless, a group of critics led by two US physicists filed a lawsuit in Hawaii last year to stop the project. They unsuccessfully appealed a similar action in 1999 to block the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York state.

CERN's officials has been working on the project since 2003, financed mainly by its 20 European member states. The United States and Japan are major contributors with observer status in CERN. AP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Bueno

Court could unseat besieged Thai PM

BANGKOK, THAILAND—THAILAND'S PRIME minister defended himself on Monday against accusations that he violated the constitution by hosting a televised cooking show while in office, the latest in a line of troubles he faces.

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej, who denies that he violated the constitution by working for a private company, would be forced to resign if found guilty by the Constitutional Court.

The trial comes on top of a defamation suit and three corruption charges for Samak, and an anti-government protesters continue their nearly two-week-old occupation of the grounds of his office complex, demanding his resignation.

The court was expected to give its ruling in the cooking show case on Tuesday. If Samak is ordered to resign by the court, it would indirectly end the political deadlock caused by the anti-government protesters, who have virtually paralyzed the government for nearly two weeks.

"By making a quick decision, the court will help a lot in resolving the political crisis," said Surasak Kanjanatit, a lawyer for a group of senators who filed the petition against Samak in the case.

"If the court rules that Prime Minister Samak is disqualified from holding office, then the political crisis will automatically cease," he said.

Before taking office seven months ago, Samak hosted a popular TV cooking show called "Tasting and Complaining," a mix of traditional Thai cooking and views on the subjects of Samak's choice.

Samak made a few appearances on the show after becoming prime minister, prompting the petition by the senators on grounds that a prime minister is not allowed under the constitution to work with private companies.

Samak, who testified for about an hour on Monday, told the court that he only received an honorarium from the television company.

"I was hired to appear on the program and get paid from time to time. I was not an employee of the company so I did not violate the law," Samak said.

He said the television company paid for his transportation.

"I prevented the working show and got paid for my acting," said Samak.

Samak was earlier indicted by the National Counter Corruption Commission, an anti-corruption body, which then forwarded the case to the Constitutional Court.

Jakkrit Bhanwanasiddhi, the managing director of the company that produced the cooking show, testified in support of Samak, saying it paid him 80,000 baht (P112,000) for the four shows.

"The promoters of our shows are not our employees, but we pay them honorariums," he told the court.

The case is the latest setback for Samak, who has not been able to enter his office, the Government House, since protesters stormed the compound on Aug. 26. Despite having emergency rule in Bangkok, the protesters have refused to leave.

IN FOR THE LONG HAUL Anti-government protesters happily exercise in the compound of the Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, early Sept. 9. —AP

A new mediation effort by Senate Speaker Prasopsuk Boondech was due to start on Monday. He is scheduled to meet with the opposition leader and the heads of the six political parties in Samak's ruling coalition government.

The protesters are led by the People's Alliance for Democracy, a loose-knit group of royalists, wealthy and middle-class urban residents, and union activists. They accuse him of corruption and violating the constitution. They say his party won general elections in December 2007 by buying votes. AP

Alliance Media Printing Inc. avails of Meralco TOU program. Alliance Media Printing, Inc., printer of broadsheet Philippine Daily Inquirer, recently signed an Hourly Time-Of-Use Agreement (TOU) memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Manila Electric Company (MERALCO). By availing of Meralco's TOU rate scheme, Alliance Media Printing is given the flexibility to manage its power consumption by shifting energy use from peak to off-peak hours - when electricity is much cheaper. Signing the MOA were (seated, from left) Atty. Francis Dino Antonio of Meralco Legal Department, Meralco First VP and Head of Customer Retail Services Roberto R. Almazoro, Alliance Media Printing Chief Finance Officer Gil Pangilinan and Alliance Media Printing Technical Support Manager Wilma Juliano. They were accompanied by other Meralco officials. (standing, from left) Eusebio Gonzales-Sr. Manager and Head of South Sales, Redentor Marquez-VP and Head of Customer Relations Management Office, Alexander Adamos-Sr. Superintendent and Team Leader of Sta. Rosa Sales and Ray Anthony Rodriguez-Sr Superintendent of Sts Rosa Sales. Alliance Media Printing is part of the Print Town Group of Companies and is an affiliate of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

OMD WINS

OMD Philippines was awarded the Electric Media Creativity in the recently concluded 2007 Agency of the Year Awards. OMD Philippines defeated the media giants in this category and fulfilled the image of OMD Global as being the creative media leader worldwide. The latest victory showcased their creativity in media a possible regardless of account size.

Rights group says Afghan civilian deaths tripled, warns of backlash

KABUL—CIVILIAN DEATHS FROM INTERnational air strikes in Afghanistan nearly tripled between 2006 and 2007 with new deadly strikes fueling a public backlash, Human Rights Watch said on Monday.

Insurgents were also guilty of causing civilian deaths by using ordinary people as "human shields" against troops, including by deploying near villages, the New York-based rights group said in a report.

But the international forces, and the US military in particular, needed to "end the mistaken view that any killing is enemy civilians," Asia director Brad Adams asserted in a statement accompanying the report.

"Mistakes by the US and State have dramatically decreased public support for the Afghan government and the presence of international forces providing security in Afghans," he said.

"Civilian deaths from air strikes are as a recruiting tool for the Taliban and risk fatally undermining the international effort to provide basic security to the people of Afghanistan."

The report comes less than a fortnight after Afghan government and US investigation teams said US-led coalition air strikes killed more than 90 villagers, most of them children, on Aug. 22 in the western village of Azizabad.

The coalition rejects the figure saying only five to seven died along with 30-35 Taliban.

If the toll of 90 is confirmed, it would be one of the deadliest such incidents since the United States led troops into Afghanistan seven years ago to remove the Taliban from government and round up extremist militants.

Human Rights Watch said that in 2006 at least 699 Afghan civilians were killed in insurgent attacks, including suicide bombings, and at least 230 in international military actions, around half in air strikes.

In 2007, at least 950 died in attacks by insurgent forces, including the Taliban and al-Qaida, and at least 321 in air strikes.

"Thus, civilian deaths from US and Nato air strikes nearly tripled from 2006 to 2007," it said.

In the first seven months of this year 2008, at least 367 civilians had been killed by insurgent attacks and at least 114 in air strikes, it said, adding its data was based on conservative estimates.

The air strikes that accounted for almost all the civilian dead were unplanned and called in to help troops under attack, Human Rights Watch said.

"Rapid response air strikes have meant higher civilian casualties, while every bomb dropped in populated areas amplifies the chance of a mistake," Adams said. AFP

Japan PM contenders clash over gov't spending, taxes

TOKYO—THE FRONTRUNNER TO BEcome Japan's next leader will pledge on Tuesday to overcome spending to boost the economy, a newspaper said on Monday, a contrast with rivals worried about the country's huge debt.

The winner of the contest to replace outgoing Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda is widely expected to call a general election, perhaps in November, to take advantage of a boost for hawks in popularity and fight off challenges from a fiery opposition.

In a manifesto entitled "Japan's potential strength—Creating a strong and cheerful Japan," former Foreign Minister Taro Aso will pledge to stimulate the economy through income tax cuts and regulatory reforms, the Yomiuri newspaper said.

Other candidates set to run in a Sept. 22 race for the leadership of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party are playing down the need for spending and focusing on the need to rein in public debt as concern with structural economic reforms.

Economics Minister Kaoru Yosano will pledge in his manifesto "Dignified Politics, Agreeable Reforms," to overhaul the tax system, including a rise in the 5 percent sales consumption tax, over three years to cover rising social security costs, the Yomiuri said.

While few expect a return to the massive spending of the 1990s that left Japan with the highest public debt among advanced nations, the LDP race is offering ruling party members a chance.

"You've talked about empowering. You're talking about priorities," said Jesper Koll, CEO of investment advisory Tantalus Research Japan.

"Aso's priority is to convince a cynical electorate with deficit spending 'lessons to learn' to reduce the burden on future generations."

Former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike, who is aiming to become Japan's first female prime minister, will include in her platform call for an environment tax as well as measures to improve working conditions for women to help address Japan's falling birth rate and declining labor force, the newspaper added.

Another former defense minister, Shigeru Ishiba, has said he wants to focus on security policy, but also wants to listen to the concerns of those who were suffering economically.

Some economists dismissed the policy gaps as more apparent than real. "In practical sense, how much difference will it make? Not much," said Richard Jerram, chief economist at Macquarie Securities (Japan) Limited.

"Their ability to make policy aggressively seems deeply constrained by the political situation, first of all, and in terms of the split in parliament and a lack of unity in the LDP."

The unpopular Fukuda quit abruptly last week, the second premier to resign in less than a year, in the face of a deadlock where the opposition controls the upper house and can delay laws.

The new LDP leader is expected to become prime minister because of the party's majority in parliament's lower house.

Despite Aso's apparent lead, some political analysts said his victory was not a done deal. Reuters

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- Federer sets sights on five vs Briton Murray /A24

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Pacman sets rare early buildup

PACQUIAO

By Roy Luarca

THERE'S NO COAXING Manny Pacquiao to train early this time.

Knowing that he will be up against a taller, stronger opponent in Oscar De La Hoya on Dec. 6, Pacquiao is leaving for the United States on Sept. 14 to begin his buildup at the Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles.

Even before the ramp-shark fight was sealed, Pacquiao had told sportswriters that he is eyeing at least 10 weeks of training at Freddie Roach's famous facility in Hollywood for the bout that is expected to make him an instant billionaire.

In his last five fights in the US, including his ninth-round stoppage of David Diaz for the WBC lightweight crown in June, Pacquiao was usually summoned with an eight-week training camp at Wild Card.

But not against De La Hoya, a 11-time world champion in six different weight classes, who enjoys huge advantages in height (four inches), reach (three inches) and weight (12 pounds) over the Filipino ring hero.

"That's why Pacquiao wants to be in the best shape ever against the world's pay-per-view king as a welterweight of 147 pounds.

Pacquiao said he sees to break loose when he beat Mexican great Marco Antonio Barrera in their first encounter in San Antonio, Texas, in 2003.

That time, Pacquiao weighed close to 132 as it was only the first round when he put Barrera away in the 12th.

Aware that De La Hoya has started training in Puerto Rico, Pacquiao is also doing light core training like playing golf and basketball.

The early departure was also prompted by a scheduled promotional tour scheduled by boxing organizers Top Rank of Bob Arum and Golden Boy Promotions of De La Hoya to drum up the bout, which World Boxing Council president Jose Sulaiman has branded as an "unequal fight both physically and technically."

Initial itinerary calls for Pacquiao to make his first stop in New York, followed by forays in San Antonio and Houston in Texas, San Francisco and Los Angeles in California, Las Vegas in Nevada and in another major city.

Though Pacquiao isn't expected to have problems making 147, his handlers intend to put him on a strict diet that would bent his stamina while keeping his weight in check.

A stiff fine of $3 million has been pegged for every excess pound both Pacquiao and De La Hoya will register during the official weigh-in.

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REVENGE: John Paul Gomez

Gomez shocks So, shares GMA Cup lead

Standings after two rounds (IM-rating-opponent)
2.5 points: 1 Jose, R Fergus (2,522) 2 Layla, J Gomez, P Nadera, R Yu-Jackson (GM) 3 Cu (2,506) 4 Mendoza (2,513) 5 Diamonsay (2,506) 6-8 Young Sun (GM) 3 Magsanoc (GM) 4 Wagamon (2,470) 5 Tang (IM) 6 Bitoon (IM) 7 Wong (2,496) 8 Bitoon, 9 Antonio, 10 Lanot

By Roy Luarca

INTERNATIONAL MASTER JOHN PAUL Gomez's conquest of Grandmaster Wesley So highlighted a rash of upsets in the second round of the third President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo Cup international chess championship Sunday night at the Ivory Fine Hotel in Dumaguete City.

Handling black, Gomez showed his mastery of the French advanced variation to subdue So in just 21 moves and share the lead with eight others, including top seed GM Merma Ramlugalayan of Kazakhstan and defending champion Li Chao of China.

The 2 points were Gomez, Dean Ninja and GM Li Shilong, Filipino GMs Eugene Torre, Mark Paragua and Darwin Laylo and IM Rolo Nadera, who stunned GM Sahidi Iskandar of Uzbekistan.

It was sweet revenge for Gomez, a three-time national junior champion, as So denied him a draw slot in the qualifier for the Dresden Chess Olympiad held in July.

Despite that loss to So in the penultimate round, Gomez topped the 17-round qualifier and secured a berth to the five-man Philippine team in Dresden.

The 23-year-old Gomez, a mechanical engineering student at La Salle, drowned Christopher Catolico in the first round.

Ramlugalayan, the highest-rated player in the nine-round event with an Elo of 2641, trounced GM Jhe Thon Hai of Vietnam, while Li subdued IM John Gadrow.

Chou humbled GM Wang Hillaniyan.

Reinvigorated by a two-month vacation in the United States, Torre downed Zhang Zijing of China to join the lead pack with Paragua, who bested Daud Rivera, and Laylo, who humbled Ehid Mont Ochoa.

Other Filipino upset-makers were NM Noel de la Cruz, who surprised IM Oliver Barbosa; NM Elmer Magsanoc, who stunned IM Oliver Dimakiling; and World Under 14 campaigner Jan Emmanuel Garcia, who trained IM Chito Garcia.

The other seven-rounds were gained by Chinese Wang Li, Kang Cheng and Haoxiang Ru.

Wong toppled GM Mario Debarsaloe of Uzbekistan; Yang bent IM Rolando Nadera; and Li bested Arnold Dion Bellosta.

Second-seeded Singaporean GM Zhang Zhong, third-seeded Georgian GM Mikhail Mchedlishvili and No. 4 Iranian GM Ahmadreza Ghaemmaghami lost a bottle of 1.5 potatoes.

Final 4 bets ride defense

By Jaroslaw W. Poro

THE LAST FINAL FOUR SPOT JUST PROVED that a successful run in collegiate basketball hinges on a good defensive game plan.

Siaton, La Salle, Far Eastern University and University of the East emerged as the top four defensive teams based on official league statistics released ahead of the elite battles in the semifinals of the 71st edition of the men's basketball tournament.

"Our defense is what got us off to a good start," said Siaton coach Monina Black.

The Blue Eagles dominated at the defensive end by limiting opponents to just 62.3 points and a 33.7-percent shooting clip in 14 games.

But after rolling the team with a 10-1 record, the Blue Eagles are expecting a tough semifinal clash on Sunday against the Warriors, the second-best defensive squad who held opponents to only 64.4 points per game.

"We have a lot of respect for UE," said Black, whose Eagles only need to win once in the semifinals to advance to the championship round. "UE had a little bit of a bad run early in the season, but they have decided that they're going to win by defense. And it got them back successful."

STANDINGS	W	L
Siaton	10	1
La Salle	10	4
FEU	10	4
UE	9	5
UST	6	8
Letran	5	9
NU	3	11

GAME TONIGHT
(Araneta Coliseum)
4 p.m.—Far Eastern vs. UE
6:30 p.m.—La Salle vs. Siaton

It will be a virtual best-of-three encounter between the defending champion Archers and the Tams as they fight for the last twice-to-beat bonus to a playoff on Thursday before clashing anew in the Final Four.

The two squads are also among the top defensive teams with the Tams limited by limiting foes to 69 ppg and the Archers fourth in holding rivals to 69.9 ppg.

Players from the four squads also ruled in key defensive statistics with seniors Nonoy Baclao of Siaton and Aldrech Ramos of FEU shining the title as the league's top shot blockers by each averaging 2.6 blocks in 14 games.

Ramos's five-fathead feat in the month at 2.3 per game, followed by FEU's Mark Barroca at 1.5 ppg, La Salle's JV Casio and UE's Marvy Aurelano tied for third at 1.4 ppg.

In junior play, Siaton and La Salle Zobel clinched the series on best incentives.

LB SALLE'S Ben Mbanefoulet (left) forces a shot off Siaton's Mike Batino in Saturday's game won by the Blue Eagles. AUGUST SEBASTIAN

Icons stun Hawks, gain 8th and last Naascu slot

INFORMATICS INternational college called upon five-time champion University of Manila, 64-63, to clinch the last berth to the next round of the 8th Unimasters basketball tournament at New Era University gym in Quezon City.

STANDINGS	W	L
Univ. Manila*	8	1
St. Jude	7	2
UST	6	3
AMA*	5	4
UMF	5	4
New Era*	5	4
Lyceum*	5	4
Informatics*	5	4
FEU	4	5
PUP	3	6
Wang Angel	2	7
AMA	0	9

The Icons overhauled a seven-point deficit in the final period en route to their fifth win in 11 games.

Ely Bonino registered with 18 points, while Erick Arcenuelas added 15 for the Icons.

Gender Siquina had 19 points and Russel Antonio chipped in 13 for the Hawks, who have already qualified to the next round with a 7-4 slate.

In the other game, New Era got 23 points from Mel Pepito to roll past Holy Angel University, 77-61.

The Nuevecan also finished with a 7-4 record.

Meanwhile, the UM Hawklets topped AMA Computer University 95-84, to remain on track for a seventh crown.

The scores	
First Game	
(Ninoy Aquino Stadium)	
INFORMATICS (64)—Santos 10, Ibana 10, Cadiles 10, Velasco 10, Aguilar 7, Santos 5, Quitalo 2, Castillo 2, Lingat 0, Sarmiento 0	
UM (63)—Nagtalon 19, Asuncion 16, Dadual 14, Cabe 9, Ilao 5, Sumagaysay 0, Rodriguez 0, Mallorca 0, Pascua 0, Rosales 0	
Quarters: 16-22, 27-28, 49-53, 64-63	
Second Game	
(Ninoy Aquino Stadium)	
NEW ERA (77)—Pepito 23, Ilao 13, Dadoy 13, Acuna 8, Rosario 7, Dumlao 7, Ramos 5, Bartolo 5, Rabaja 2	
HOLY ANGEL (61)—Villar 19, Mendoza 12, Tanalgo 9, Tungol 6, Dario 6, Roy 5, Bautista 3, Lawsin 0, Manuel 0, Dalino 0, Avila 0, Z	
Quarters: 20-17, 33-30, 53-46, 77-61	

Staglets just a win shy of fourth crown

By Cedrik P. Tapay

ONE MORE WIN.

That's what separates the San Sebastian Staglets from a fourth straight NCAA juniors basketball crown.

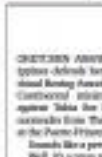
Ardie Bringas proved dominant in the entire period as the Staglets hacked out a 97-80 victory to overcome cross Jose Rizal University to complete a 12-game sweep of the elimination round yesterday at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Scoreless in the fourth period, the 6-foot-3 Bringas poured eight of his 29 points in extra time to send the Staglets from JRU star Keith Agenda.

In his first game after setting a league-record 52 points, the 6-1 Agenda was made to work by a towering San Sebastian frontline, which held him to 7-of-23 shooting. Agenda still finished with 21 points and 18 rebounds.

"We actually focused on the other key player because we knew Agenda would get his points," said San Sebastian coach Raymond Tiburcio.

College of St. Benilde-La Salle Green Hills pulled the plug on San Beda's Final Four hopes with a 77-68 win in the second game.



The scores	
First Game	
(Cuneta Astrodome)	
SAN SEBASTIAN (97)—Bringas 29, Agenda 21, Arellano 12, Ramos 11, Ramirez 8, Ramos 6, Ramos 5, Ramos 3, Ramos 2	
JOSE RIZAL (80)—Ramos 20, Ramos 18, Ramos 15, Ramos 12, Ramos 8, Ramos 4, Ramos 3	
Quarters: 20-18, 40-36, 63-58, 80-80, 97-80	
Second Game	
(Cuneta Astrodome)	
CSB-LSGH (77)—Ramos 20, Ramos 15, Ramos 12, Ramos 10, Ramos 8, Ramos 6, Ramos 4	
SAN BEDA (68)—Ramos 18, Ramos 16, Ramos 14, Ramos 10, Ramos 6, Ramos 4	
Quarters: 18-16, 36-32, 58-50, 77-68	

Boxing garbage banned in Puerto Princesa

DEFENDING ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES defends her Women's International Boxing Association (WIBA) interCantonment minimumweight crown against Tahira Ibe Samara, the No. 1 contender from Thailand, on Saturday at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum.

Sounds like a press release?

Well, it's a press release.

Of course, this one is not one of the usual, not so trite or Done endless cocktail announcements we see in our sports pages.

We rate the championship schedule for two reasons:

It's the first time we've heard about the Filipino who reigns as an International boxing champion.

Second, the support was made by Johnny Floirde, son of the great Flash Floirde, who called up over the weekend.

* * *

Presented by Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn, Vice Mayor Lucile Sayoyo and the City Council of Puerto Princesa, its coordination with Johnny Floirde Management International, the back-to-back championship card will be top-billed by the title bout between IBF welterweight champion Israel Dacanpay and top challenger Yuri Nolla.

Johnny Floirde says the boxing card, to be staged in a modern venue with a 10,740-seating capacity, aims to develop more international sports activities in Palawan and make it the sports tourism capital of the Philippines.

By the way, Abraid and Marmolejo Abrasas, who clashed with another Thai boxer, are both from Puerto Princesa City, reason the promoters expect full-house attendance on Saturday.

Another big bout will pit IBF fourth-weight champion Warrie Ballon against foreigner Sitthichai of Thailand next 10 rounds.

It's not too well known that Johnny Floirde once put on the boxing gloves, when he was still younger.

It was square, almost secret quest to ride the ring.

But before people knew it, Johnny was already headed home with a gold medal from the 1979 Southeast Asian Games in Jakarta, where he topped the lightweight class.

No, there were no room-about-Indonesia following in the footsteps of his great father.

Nothing of those doying, Bowery career long regularly frowned upon by Dr. Flash.

But who could be prouder than Bal Floirde, who showed up at the airport in a colorful Hawaiian shirt to welcome his son.

Before Johnny could pounce his medal to Bal Floirde, he first handed the ring memorial a one of Lucky Strike cigarettes, no filter.

The elder Floirde's brand was Camel, but Johnny could not find room a pack at the duty-free shops in Jakarta.

* * *

Yes, yes, there were no available records an hour for Johnny Floirde went inside the ring after that one spot in Jakarta.

But listen to this interesting detail carried in the final paragraph of the press release:

"What may steal the thunder from this blockbuster card is the fight of the grandson of the late Gabriel "Flash" Floirde who has eyed boxing professionally after graduating from college. Juno Martin "Bal" Floirde, undefeated in six pro fights, is scheduled to face a tough opponent.

In order to truly be respected, Johnny won't be caught comparing his son, Bal, to Bal's father.

OK, Juno Martin's opponent has not been identified.

But you can bet he won't be pitted against a clown, the way they did again to Cuba the other week, in trying to prop Ronna Rocon Ramirez back in the fighting.

This is no press release:

Bal Wayne Hagedorn, who hates garbage, is sorry to issue a ban on trashy punches, especially for this Saturday's fight card.

* * *

OPEN OPENING. Nona Claus Gagarra, head of Asi Taucbi & Sanchi Development Technologies, internationally acclaimed manufacturer of wellness systems, opens its first local showroom on Wednesday. Located at Unit C, ground floor, Almeda Arcade, 104 Pasay Road, Makati City, the showroom will display the latest equipment used by many of the world's best athletes and celebrities. Technogym wellness systems are exclusively distributed in the Philippines by E. Aguirre HC International Inc. There will be a grand launch of Technogym on Sept. 10 at the Blue Leaf Events Pavilion in McKinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio.)

Sportswatch

Danao Shell chess listing on

REGISTRATION FOR THE OMNIOLOGY the Shell National Youth Active Chess Championship is ongoing, with the event on Sept. 13 and 14 at SM City Davao.

The Kiddie and Cadet categories and Juniors divisions are expected to vie in the Davao tournament. Thirty-six players—18 each for the 14-under and 20-under categories—have clinched spots in the finals with eight more to be called from the final leg of the nationwide leaderboard sponsored by Pilipinas Shell.

The top eight finishers will contest the Blue of Grandmasters Wesley So and Mark Paragua, will host the grand finals on Nov. 8 and 9 at SM Megamall.

Cainta staglest finals today

THE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND OF THE Cainta Open 6-Dog Derby unfolds at 1:0 p.m. today at the Cainta Coliseum with nine 2008 stakes on the line.

Hosted by Premier Leisure and Racing Inc. Joey, the racing series drew a record field of 396 entries. The biggest victor Lucena bankdrayage chronicle reputation barn year.

Participants from Batangas, Cavite, Rizal and Pampanga, in that order, comprised the biggest number of qualifiers with 3-0 and-two stables in the P75 million derby.

Air21 five bent on luring Jaworski

By Mayang R. Castillo

AIR21 OFFICIALS FORMALLY PRESENTED their proposal to Ian Ferrer Sen. Robert Jaworski to Express coach for the coming Philippine Basketball Association season during a meeting yesterday.

A source privy to the negotiations refused to reveal the details of the negotiations although he confirmed that another meeting is scheduled sometime this week.

If ever, the stint with Air21 will be the comeback of Jaworski in the PBA, where he treasure one of its biggest stars while playing for Siyano before joining Gordon San Miguel in the 1980s in the same roosts.

The 16th Season opens with the Philippine Cup on Oct. 5.

Signing up Jaworski has been a two-year dream for the Express and management took the run after Air21 finished second to Barangay Ginebra in the Fiesta Cup Finals recently.

Aside from a first-ever championship for the franchise, management thinks Jaworski can also establish a massive fan base for the 21-like which led to Ginebra.

This development came on the heels of current rumour Bo Durand's wish to leave the team to pursue his MBA studies at the Ateneo and help run a school which his wife put up.

Aunzo clings to slim lead despite a 77; B'sabas 2nd

By Manong R. Castillo

SILANG, CAVITE—FREDDIE AUNZO ETRUEL glad to a five-over-par 77 yesterday but managed to cling to a precarious one-shot lead after 36 holes of the World Amateur Team qualifiers.

The reigning Philippine amateur champion posted a two-day total of 147 at Silverio's Golfers course here to remain one up on Jessie Bulawan, the National Golfers Open produ cer, who fired a 78.

With the pins tucked in all the difficult spots and the winds blowing from all directions, Rufino Bayona, Ireneo's ICTSI teammate, had the day's best round of 74 to move into a third place tie with Jessel Abalos (77) at 150.

ELEVEN-By-one shot

Undefeated Tenley Antonio was good for a 75 to tie in fifth spot, another stroke adrift, even as Mark Fernandez, a veteran of three SEA Games last year, virtually kissed his hopes goodbye after an 84 for 156.

Erwin Vidanes continued to bring up the rear of the seven-man field despite a 77. He shot an opening 82 and lay 12 strokes off the pace with a 138 going into the last two rounds set over the Riviera's difficult layout today.

The National Golf Association of the Philippines is conducting the tryouts to determine the three members of the team that will compete in the World Amateur Team next month in Adelaide, Australia.

Since the Johannesburg edition of the World has its 2006 counterpart here because it used to only three players with the top two scorers counting each day.

Two trophies will be disputed—the trophies Sann for women and the Eisenhower for the men—with hostilities set to start on Oct. 9.

The men's event will begin on Oct. 10.

The 20-year-old Aunzo, who will be using the World Am as his final big tournament before he turns 21 and loses his amateur status, was very early out to a dropped shot on the 6th then holes on the back nine after making the turn in seven par.

Aunzo had just one birdie for the day—on the fifth from 10 feet—against six bogeys. He scrambled to make par at his final two holes.

IRAN head coach Rajko Toroman (center) instructs his players during a pre-Olympic scrimmage in Taylorsville, Utah in July.

SBP tapping Iran mentor for RP quintet

By Jose Mayuga

THE GENIUS BEHIND IRAN'S FLOURISHing basketball program could be the answer the Philippine national team badly needs to regain its footing on the international scene.

The Strasburg-bedeviled ng Pilipinas is close to sending a deal with Iran head coach Rajko Toroman whom officials approached last week during the Fiba Asia Championship for Junior men in Tehran, Iran.

SBP executive director Noli Eala revealed that Toroman, the man who brought Iran to the Olympics after 60 years, would be tapped as consultant and eventually head the national basketball team's program.

The 53-year-old Serbian led the Iranians to the Fiba-Asia championship last year in Ishinomiya, Japan. The tournament was the continental qualifier for the Beijing Olympics.

The Iranians finished 11th in the Games, an improvement on their 14th-place finish in the 1948 London Olympics.

If the SBP and Toroman come to terms, Eala said the veteran coach of many European clubs would arrive in Manila no later than Sept. 25 to watch the UAAP men's basketball finals and to formalize his contract.

"Mr. Toroman's gave us his terms and we think its reasonable," said Eala. "It's now just a matter of finalizing the contract."

EALA: Fair terms

Eala, the former PBA commissioner, also said at least three others want Toroman's way after his contract expired with the Iranian team.

Toroman was also offered a contract extension by Iran, a head coaching job with the Lebanon men's team and an assistant coach portfolio with the Memphis Grizzlies in the NBA.

Toroman's set player, 7-foot-2 Hamed Haddadi, will see action with the Grizzlies after he helped clinched the distinction to play for the league.

"He's a skills coach and he's responsible for developing the skills of Haddadi," said Eala. "He also knew a lot of tall players and he could do the same for us."

Eala mentioned 6-foot-11 Filipino-American Gregory Slaughter of the University of Hawaii and 6-foot Arizona Fajardo of the University of Cebu and Japeth Aguilar as three of the players Toroman could develop.

"It's one piece of the puzzle to help the RP team achieve its long-term goals," said Eala.

Eala said the SBP also considered tapping former Chinese team reserves Jonas Kachiunias and Lithuanian coach Simas Kreivinis.

Pinoys eye 8 more sports in Laos SEAG

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINES WILL LOBBY FOR the inclusion of at least eight more sports when the Southeast Asian Games Federation convenes this week in Vientiane, Laos.

To be represented by track and field president Go Teng Kok, the country will line for the inclusion of billiards, basketball, archery, cycling, fencing, rowing, dance sports and bowling in the host nation of events Laos plans to stage for the 2009 SEA Games.

"There are only 22 sports chosen but they (Laos) want to stage, but since the other member countries need to lobby (for the addition of more sports), we will also lobby," Go told the Inquirer from Bangkok, where he conferred with Thai sports officials before proceeding to the Laos capital.

Laos, which played eighth-overall during the 2007 Thailand SEA Games, announced that, with the help of other countries, it is on track with its preparation for its first-ever hosting job.

Stained by wars for decades, Laos wants to use the Games as a launching pad for economic development through pledges of support from China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam, according to the nation's Olympic chief, Somphone Phongsa.

Laos, however, threw first after announcing plans to stage little-known sports like chessboxing, many less, pentanggol, instead of traditional Olympic sports like gymnastics, archery, cycling and weightlifting.

China reportedly promised to help finance the building of a 20,000-seat stadium and two indoor stadiums, a tennis center and the country's first Olympic-sized swimming pool.

South Korean competitors have agreed to finance a taekwondo center and a 27-hole golf course.

Japan is said to be funding a judo arena, while Thailand has reports pledged millions of dollars to train technical officials in 11 sports.

Neighbouring Vietnam, which hosted the Games in 2003, reportedly shouldered the cost of building the athletes' village.

Thailand fanned 43 events last year, while the Philippines put up 42 in 2005.

La Consolacion, RTU tossers gain Final Four

LA CONSOLACION COLLEGE MANILA AND Rizal Technological University scored straight-set victories to make the Series A semifinals of the 30th SPHSAA volleyball tournament at the RTU gym over the weekend.

RTU ousted last season's Series B champion Emilio Aguinaldo College, 25-17, 25-17, 25-23, and LCGH busted World Citi College, 25-22, 25-21, 25-20.

Eight-time defending champion Lyceum bent LCCM to save Sunday's semifinals rubber, 25-23, 25-17, 25-22 (Lady Lancers 19-11).

In Series B, Centro Escolar University dropped Mapua College's four-game win with a 25-15, 25-21, 15-25, 25-24 win to improve to 2-2. Mapua kept the lead at 4-1.

University of Asia and the Pacific retained second spot at 4-2 after downing San Beda College-Alabang, 25-23, 25-15, 25-20, 25-23, while St. Scholastica's College sparked the second win in five starts with a 25-17, 25-21, 22-25, 25-13 win over host College of St. Benilde.

St. Scholastica likewise won its rubber's assignment over SBCA, 16-25, 25-23, 25-19, to grab the sole lead at 4-0, and its juniors match against Philippine Women's University 25-16, 25-17, 25-15, to remain in second spot at 4-1.

SBCA found bowling surprise champion Da La Salle Zobel, a 25-22, 25-12 winner over Mapua, for second place at 3-1, and kept the juniors top spot at 5-0

BOOST FOR SHOOTING. Philippine National Shooting Association president Art Macapagal and National Youth Development Program chair Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla call on Philippine Marine Corps commandant, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, to express their gratitude to the Marine chief for allowing PNSA members to practice at the PSC-Marine range in Fort Bonifacio up to 9 p.m. daily. Photo shows Macapagal (third from left) shaking hands with General Dolorfino. Also in picture (from left) are coach Bartolome Teyab, NYDP vice chair Bobbie Herrera, Padilla and shooters Andrea Marr and Susan Aguado.

Animo Sprint Triathlon set Sunday

THE LOCAL TRIATHLON COMMUNITY IS EnCouraging full support to the Animo Sprint Triathlon set this Sunday morning, Sept. 14, 6:30 AM hosted by the Ayala Alabang Village Association.

The brisk no-sear of registrants in the fund-raising race include youngsters from the Super Kids triathlon program, beginners, recreationals, and competitive participants.

"We are already nearing the maximum number which the venue can accommodate and by race day, we expect to hit our capacity" said Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Tap) president Ken Carmona.

"We are happy that our triathletes have responded well to the call of Batch '81 of the De La Salle Green Hills Alumni Association which is spearheading this fund-raising event."

The event will raise funds for the education of indigent students at the Animo Hilario Integrated School in Bagac, Bataan, which is run by the De La Salle system.

The members of the national team will be participating as the event's special guests.

WC QUALIFYING

In-form Pucay out to strike with Que

KUALA LUMPUR—Filipino Mart Pucay is looking forward to the Fonbis International Challenge next week as a venue which has brought him some success in the past.

"The talented Pucay, who is enjoying a productive season, returns to the country for the first time this season, will pair up for the first time with reigning Philippine Open champion Angelo Que in their bid to qualify for the Olympic Minister Hills World Cup in China in November.

A total of 13 teams have entered the Fonbis International Challenge at Kota Permai Golf and Country Club from Sept. 18 to 21 where the top three runners will qualify for the World Cup.

While Que is bristling for a maiden World Cup appearance, Pucay has qualified previously for the elite team competition when he partnered Bobo Carabua Casas in 1999 and finished third at Kota Permai.

"I am looking forward to returning to Kota Permai as I've played in a few tournaments there in the past," said Pucay. "We are determined to make it through that week."

The 38-year-old has enjoyed three top-10s on the Asian Tour this season, including a third-place finish at the recent Benavision Indonesian President Invitational.

With Que in good form as well, the Filipino duo plan to emulate last year's successful campaign by Juvic Pagunsan and Donald Benites.

"I played really well in the 1999 qualifiers and I made it through that year with Bobo," said Pucay. "I also love to a maidens finish played there in 2000 when I partnered Danny Canete, so I have the experience of competing in team competitions and I really enjoyed it."

Pucay said his participating with Que would be a very good one as they are complement each other.

"It's great to partner Angelo that puts the ball long and I'm looking forward to our partnership," said Pucay.

"We've been gone to varying degrees now and while I can't make it that far, we will try to take advantage of each other's strength."

With football (better half) being played in the first and third rounds and foursomes (alternate shot) mostly the second and final rounds, Pucay says that the key is to record solid qualifying scores as they are confident in their ability to play well in the foursomes.

Apart from the Philippines, Malaysia's Danny Chia and Ian Seet, Singapore's Marcus Mattai and Lam Chih Ping, South Korea's Kim Hyung-sung and Kim Kyung-tae and India's Jeev Milkha Singh and Jyoti Randhawa will also be in the field.

Fanatewan Molinar was tripped to battle it out for the three tickets to the World Cup.

PUCAY: Old hand

QUE: First time

Lipa five downs Cebuanos, keeps hopes alive

JEFFREY SANDERS SCORED 20 points as the Batangas Lipa Kobrador fired its fight another day with an 85-83 win over the Cebu Chiefs in Game 2 of their Sweet Lipa Pilipinas semifinal series at the Lipa Cultural Center.

The Brothers got off to a **lethargic start, losing** 32-18, at the end of the opening period to avert a sweep by the Nibbs, who won the first two games on their homecourt.

Al Stogner and reserve Chris Cross added 16 and 13 points for the Brothers.

Stogner, who is reportedly close to signing a deal with a PBA squad, also grabbed seven rebounds and had eight assists.

The Brothers will host Game 4 of the showdown sponsored by Hotcoa, Accel, Burlington, Mobius, Metaflame, Silicon Spring, Super Sports, and Lapsap Phamaceuticals.

A fifth and deciding game will be played at the New Cebu Coliseum, if necessary.

The winner Simon Bendoy unit will play the victor of the Harbour Centre-Taguig Strong Global and the Super Alkazar Gt. Masters, now leveled 1-1.

The Stiffs shot better and headed into rehaunch, 49-36.

But they committed more errors, 22-7, in the Brothers took a 13-11 edge in turnover points.

The scores

BROTHERS (85)—Sanders 20, Stogner 16, Cruces 13, Custodio 12, Cruz 8, Quilo 6, De Guzia 5, Lim 2, Manalo 2, Dela Cruz 0, Ramos 0

B.L. CHIEFS (83)—Bendoy 24, Andaya 15, Salonga 13, Baez 10, Sagaga 8, Hamit 6, Abad 5, Cayuk 2, Lumaya 2, Cruz 2, Tuck 2, Mabaya 1, Padilla 0, Tampus 0

Quarters: 32-18, 53-38, 68-60, 85-83

SPORTS

Serena rules US Open, back as No. 1

SERENA Williams took six-year US Open drought

NEW YORK—DEPLOYING THE salsoo and tenacity that helped her dominate tennis earlier in the decade, Serena Williams reclaimed Jelena Jankovic of Serbia, 6-4, 7-5, for her third US Open championship and ninth Grand Slam title Saturday.

She threw her racket high into the sky hollering and hopping in a celebration that even she thought might've been over the top.

"I'm sorry I got so excited," she told Jankovic when they met at the net.

Williams' father, Richard, jumped on his feet after the final point. He didn't seem to expect his daughter to do the same.

"I never knew Serena to be very, very excited. I knew Serena to be very, very tense," he said after it was over. "She's a combination of a pit bull dog, a young Mike Tyson and an alligator."

The fourth-seeded Williams beat sister Venus in the quarterfinals and ended the tournament without losing a set. This win earned Serena her third silver trophy at Flushing Meadows and restored her crown to No. 1 for the time since August 2003, the longest gap at the top for a woman.

"It's been so long," she said.

Williams calmed down in time for the on-court trophy presentation, and smiled when she received the winner's check for $1.3 million. Still full of personality, Jankovic mumbled aloud, "How much did I get?"

Jankovic earned $750,000 for her first Grand Slam final.

The second-seeded Jankovic certainly had her chances—up 5-3 in the second set, she led 40-0 with Williams serving.

"I felt I had her. I had her, because she was really tired at the end of the second set," Jankovic said. "Who knows what would have happened if I had got into a third set? I probably would have had the upper hand. But who knows?"

Jankovic won over fans with more than her determined play and her penchant for doing the splits to crank shots. She's a natural favorite, often talking to people in the stands and frequently stretching herself on the giant video boards high above Arthur Ashe Stadium.

At one point, she cast herself as the screen and flexed her hair.

"They should turn it off, because I keep looking," she said. "You see your big face up there and you can't help but look up."

AP

Federer sets sights on five vs British upstart Murray

ROGER Federer shares 13th Grand Slam crown.

NEW YORK—Tennis history will be made Monday in the US Open men's final, but whether a familiar face or a shocking upstart claims the $1.3-million champion's prize remains in question.

Either Roger Federer will win his 13th title[1] to do—one shy of the all-time record set by Pete Sampras—and Rik US Open in a row, or Andy Murray will become the first British man to win a Slam title in the 68-year Open era.

Both used Murray-soured world number one Rafael Nadal, 6-2, 7-6 (5), 6-6, 6-4, in a rain-interrupted semifinal that was completed Sunday while Swiss second seed Federer stunned fourth seed Novak Djokovic, 6-3, 5-7, 7-5, 6-2, on Saturday.

"He has loads of experience in these situations and it's something new for me," Murray said. "I know I'm going to have to play great to have a chance of winning but I've played well the last couple of weeks.

"I played well enough to beat the number one player in the world and I've beaten Roger. I have the tennis to compete with these guys. I just have to make sure to do it for three sets out of five rather than a set or two."

The first US Open since 1887 to be packed into a Monday finish could see Federer win his 56 career title and 34th consecutive US Open match, having last lost to Jarmil Nalbandian in the fourth round in 2000.

"I like to call Wimbledon my second home. I've had so much success there," Federer said. "But I could equal my five Wimbledon wins on this at a big stadium."

Even bigger for Federer, whose 17th Slam final puts him two shy of Sampras' record, is the chance to put himself on the brink of matching Sampras.

"The first thing is obviously very much alive and everything is possible but I would like to focus on the five in a row right now," Federer said. "That would be huge."

After hours to build in the Wimbledon and French Open final, Federer enjoys his 11th final in his past 14 Slams with some people thinking he has slipped even as she bids for a much win in that span.

"We've all sort of won during if he can break the record," said US Davis Cup captain Patrick McEnroe. "It's not going to get any easier for him in the next few years."

But of the reasons is Murray who will rise to fourth in the new rankings, matching Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski for the top mark ever by a British man after lowering only the third British man to an Open era. Slam final.

Coach Miskey as a believer in Federer.

"He's an underdog now. I don't understand why everyone thinks he's not playing well," the four-played underhowling in the best tournaments and he's in the final for the fifth straight year here. It's a relentless run," Murray said.

"He's playing great. I just think the level of tennis has gotten better."

Murray has a 2-1 record against Federer, losing their first meeting at the 2005 Bangkok final but securing at Cincinnati in 2006 and in Dubai last March.

"I've played well against him in the past," Murray said. "I think a Slam final is different to the matches I've played against him before. He has won over 30 matches in a row here so he's going to be feeling confident going in."

Federer, 27, would be tied alone in win five Slams in a row at two different venues. No one has won four US titles in a row since Bill Tilden in 1924.

In the 68-year Open era, only Sampras and Jimmy Connors have won five US titles.

Federer's come-day of rest is no worry for Murray.

"Ideally you would want to be in his position. It's slightly better," Murray said. "But it's a Grand Slam final and I'm not going to let 24 hours of rest get in the way of giving 110 percent. There's not going to be the difference."

His son knows Murray's threat potential better than Federer.

"It will be interesting to see how he handles it but I have a feeling he is a guy who plays well on the big occasions," Federers said. "That's why I need to be very, very careful how I play."

AFP

ANDY Murray: Britain's first Grand Slam finalist in 11 years.

Villegas claims first PGA crown by 2 shots

ST. LOUIS—FOR THREE YEARS, Camilo Villegas managed to make a name for himself without winning.

He was the young Colombian with model good looks and chic clothing, timber enough to strike a pretzel-shaped pose on the green to send pars, smearing him the nickname "Spider Man." Trouble was, not many of those pars went in.

That changed at the BMW Championship on Sunday.

Clinging to a one-shot lead on the back nine at Bellerive Country Club, Villegas sunned par such a 12-foot putt, followed that with two-feather putts and finished off a 2-under 68 for his first US PGA Tour title.

"It was a pretty good little stretch there that just turned my nerves and showed myself that I was good enough to win one there," Villegas, who finished at 15-under 265 and collected $1.06 million, said.

Villegas pulled away from Jim Furyk, held off Anthony Kim and wound up winning by two shots over Dudley Hart, who finished his final two holes for a 65. It was Hart's best finish in four years and it earned him two trips to Georgia—the US Team Championship in two weeks and the Ryder Cup in April.

With one playoff event remaining, the FedEx Cup essentially is over.

Vijay Singh, who won the first two events, tied for 46th and earned enough points that all he has to do to complete four rounds at the Tour Championship in two weeks to collect the $10-million payoff.

AP

CAMILO Villegas

Massa steals GP win from Hamilton

SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL—Ferrari's Felipe Massa was declared the winner of the Belgian Grand Prix after McLaren driver Lewis Hamilton was penalized for cutting a chicane turn in a thrilling duel that ended with world champion Kimi Räikkönen.

Hamilton crossed the line with an edge of 14.4 seconds over Massa in a dramatic race after Räikkönen had crashed into the barrier, but the British driver was penalized with 25 seconds for his illegal maneuver.

"I'm very sorry," he said in a statement that Hamilton "cut the chicane and gained an advantage" which quickly allowed him to take the lead from Räikkönen in the ensuing short finale run on city tires by race drivers.

The penalty demoted Hamilton to third place, with BMW Sauber's Nick Heidfeld promoted to second after he was one of the few to pick wet-weather tires in the final pit stop.

McLaren plans to launch an official complaint with FIA's International Court of Appeal. It was unclear when it would be lodged and heard.

AP

Powell fails to overtake Bolt

RIETI, ITALY—ASAFA POWELL FAILED OVER two attempts to break Usain Bolt's world record in the 100 meters at the Rieti Grand Prix on Saturday.

Powell clocked 9.77 seconds in his semifinal heat and then ran 9.82 to win the event on the same track where he set a then-world record of 9.74 a year ago.

Powell blew started before the final got off cleanly, and his start in the race was not his best.

"If I got my normal start in the final I would have broken the world record," Powell said. "I know that I can break the world record."

Bolt established the current world mark of 9.69 at last month's Beijing Olympics, where Powell finished fifth.

Powell was helped by a slight tail wind for both of his runs but he said he'll be watching part-ner Michael Frater running alongside him in the final. Still, he couldn't produce his best.

"In the heats I got a good start but I didn't run as hard in the last part of the race as I ran in the final," Powell said, adding that he plans to run at least once more this season in Warsaw, Poland, and possibly also at the season finals in Stuttgart, Germany, next weekend.

Bolt cruised his second after beating Powell again in Brussels on Friday.

"I'm very tired, especially after running in Belgium," Powell said. "But it was still a good performance."

AP

SPECIAL ATHLETE China's Zhang Tongyan throws the javelin in the women's F42-44 classification event at the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games. China, United States and Britain all have five golds so far. But the host has 11 total medals, the US 10 medals and Britain nine. Right, China she topped the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games with 63 gold medals, beating Britain and Canada.

Olympic beach volley champs fall

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA—Olympic beach volleyball gold medalists Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh lost for the second time since the Beijing Games on Sunday and missed their first AVP Crocs Tour final since April 2007.

In the biggest upset in women's volleyball this season, No. 3 seeds Jen Kessy and April Ross beat the top-seeded team of Walsh and May-Treanor, 21-15, 15-21, 20-18, in the semifinals of the Santa Barbara Shootout.

Last week in Ohio, May-Treanor and Walsh tied for the first time in more than a year, dropping a 21-19, 19-21, 20-22 decision to Elaine Youngs and Nicole Branagh in final.

That snapped the two-time Olympic champions' winning streak at 112 matches and 19 titles. Their previous loss came on Aug. 19, 2007, also to Branagh and Youngs.

AP

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Marts cheer US move on mortgage firms

Peso rallies to 46.52 to $1; stocks also up

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY REBOUNDED AND MOVED AWAY FROM the critical 47 mark against the dollar as Asian financial markets cheered the US government's bailout of mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

The local currency yesterday rallied to a high of 46.29 before closing at 46.52 to a dollar at the Philippine Dealing System. It gained P0.305 from Friday's closing rate of 46.825.

"The outlook on the market was slightly positive. Risk aversion was lessened and there was profit taking on the US dollar," said Banco de Oro Unibank strategist Jonathan Ravelas.

However, he said the peso's rise yesterday was tempered by a statement from the oil cartel Opec (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) that it would consider cutting back oil production because there might be "oversupply" in the global markets. Only a few weeks ago, Opec justified the rise in crude prices to $147 a barrel to problems on supply.

This developed as many analysts believed that the commodity price bubble may have burst after light, sweet crude sharply retreated below $110 a barrel, a crucial mark mentioned by the market to confirm the reversal in commodity prices.

MARTE M.

Vehicle sales up 13.1% in first 8 months

DESPITE A SLUGGISH MARKET IN August, a seasonally low-sales month, vehicle sales in the first eight months of the year grew by 13.1 percent to 80,196 units, from 71,563 units in the same period last year.

According to the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. and the Truck Manufacturers Association, sales in August fell 14.9 percent to 9,906 units, against July sales of 11,636 units.

The industry groups attributed the volume decline to the so-called "ghost month" and the limited stock availability of some types of vehicles.

Sales should pick up in the remaining months of the year, however, the joint Compi-TMA report said.

Despite the sales decline in August, the local vehicle market was still on track to meeting the sales target of 120,000 vehicles for the year.

As in the past months, the commercial vehicle segment led sales in the first eight months, with a market share of 64.8 percent.

From 46,865 units last year, commercial vehicle sales expanded by 12.1 percent to 52,518 units, driven by the market's condo- and preference for multipurpose vehicles.

The segment, however, posted a 21 percent sales decline in August, to 5,804 units from 7,425 units the month before.

Light commercial vehicles accounted for the bulk of commercial vehicle sales from January to August at 39,013 units, followed by Asian utility vehicles at 12,153 units.

The passenger car segment grew by 13 percent in the first eight months, from 25,498 units in 2007 to 28,320 this year, accounting for 35 percent of the vehicle sales pie.

This segment posted a 2.7 percent sales decline in August, to 4,102 units from 4,215 units in July, due to limited stock availability.

Toyota Motors Philippines Corp. remained the industry leader, with total sales of 30,073 units as of end-August for a 38.5-percent share of the market.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. followed with sales reaching 8,363 units and a market share of 10.1 percent. Honda Cars Philippines Inc. came in next with a market share of 9.2 percent from sales of 7,679 units.

Abigail L. Ho

Jollibee gets $100-M loan

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacsaw

FAST FOOD GIANT JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. is borrowing $100 million to fund its expansion in China, one of the biggest and fastest growing consumer markets in the world.

Bankrupting the loan are Mitsubishi, Banco de Oro Unibank, BDO, Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ Ltd. Manila Branch and HSBC All Hong Kong Branch.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Jollibee said the agreement covered a loan amounting to 780 million yuan, or about $100 million.

"We will use the money [this year] and in 2009 in China specifically for the expansion of the store network of Yonghe King and our other brands, the investments in concessionary and products development facilities of the Jollibee group and the acquisition of [unspecified] Hongzhongyuan Investment China based in Beijing," Jollibee chair and chief executive officer Tony Tan Caktiong said.

In China, Jollibee operates 123 stores, with 121 Yonghe King stores, and Jollibee under brand Chao Shan Tang tea house. Since Dec. 31, 2007, the group has expanded its stores in China by 23 stores.

Last June 18, Jollibee signed a joint venture agreement to acquire 70 percent of Lao Dong restaurant chain in Taipei for $1.3 million and invest another $700,000 for the expansion of the Lao Dong business in Taiwan and China.

Last Aug. 23, Jollibee also said it would complete by October the purchase of 100 percent of Hongzhongyuan restaurant, which operates 37 stores mostly in Beijing. The acquisition was estimated at $55.5 million. The Jollibee group does not have a commitment to China.

Jollibee chief finance officer Ysmael Baysa said the facility provided the lowest cost of financing for Jollibee's business expansion in China.

Funding for China expansion

So much bad news

Rhue Nathaniel

GLOBALLY THIS HAS BEEN ONE OF the worst weeks in years and matters everywhere are shifting...the United States, Europe, China, Japan, all stalwarts of economic and financial life. Commodities are sliding to new lows with nickel, lead and soft commodities hearing the losses. Producers and traders have been hit and a commodity hedge fund was closed after it left 27 percent. Rarely have we had so much bad news in one week and last Thursday, the Dow fell 340 points.

The most worrying statistic was the jobs market where it was feared that the figure could be anywhere from 60,000 to 75,000. Ahead of the figure announced on Friday, the Dow opened 150 points lower. The figure of 66,000 was worse than anyone expected and even the unemployment rate up to 6.1 percent. On this news, the Dow recovered all its loss and closed 39 points higher.

To make matters worse, the government admitted that the figures for June and July were underrated by 50,000, so August will probably be revised upward next month to 100,000 or more. To date, the economy has lost 605,000 jobs this year and the figure could rise to a million.

How can anybody doubt that America is in a recession? The jump in consumer spending was due to the stimulus package and was both perfect timing to cheer another one before the elections. The Dow has suffered triple-digit losses 31 times this year, its worst record since 2002.

The outlook for jobs is very depressing, yet 27,000 workers at Boeing were on strike after rejecting an offer of 11 percent over 3 years. The directors of Anheuser-Busch refused to encouraging letter and told them to stay on strike for as long as it takes. This will push back demand for the Hexadrive for which there are 900 orders from 58 airlines. There were also chief strikes at Chrysler, General Motors and a near shutdown at Verizon. How tough it was employers be when their jobs are on the line?

The heartwarming heading for the US Gulf Coast turned out to be a bore 2 metres and caused little, if any, damage to the rigs, which had to be shut down and their crews evacuated. Oil fell to $106 a barrel, which is good for motorists like us, and Opec said it would be satisfied with a price of $100 a barrel. Iran and a few other producers disagreed but Saudi Arabia can make up the difference, if necessary.

Secretary Paulson announced on Sunday that Fannie and Freddie would be put into conservatorship and new CEOs would be appointed. The Treasury, the FHFA and the Fed will effectively take over the companies and guarantee their viability. They will continue to provide mortgages for another year, after which they will allow their portfolio to run down at the rate of 10 percent a year as they are paid off. No dividends will be declared on the common shares, which are now worthless but they were only optimistic anyway. At this point, the value of the preferred stock is unknown but 36 large banks hold massive amounts so that there might be further large write-offs to come.

This should stabilize Wall Street and possibly financial companies such as AIG, American Express, Bank of America, Citigroup and JPMorgan. Goldman Sachs downgraded Merrill Lynch to a sell, stating that it expects a bigger third-quarter loss (and to find mortgage loss and citigroup has for the year that was previously expected).

The dollar remained firm while all other currencies dropped. The euro dipped, partly because Germany, the largest economy, recorded a fall in GDP of 2.4 percent. Britain is doing even worse and the pound is falling faster than ever, from 2.00 to 1.95 against the dollar. My pension is almost worthless and I will have to reapply for my part-time job as insurance on the ice rink in Stagecoll. Ireland and Spain are also going to the dole.

Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. has closed two more banks and increased the number on the watch list from 90 to 117 in the second quarter. Fortunately, the depositors are fully protected but this is causing the Fed hundreds of millions of dollars. So far, only small banks have failed but what if there is another bear-bearish? Will the 25-cent salary cease in the rescues? Is there no limit that the government will not lend and who is going to pay for it?

The Hang Seng fell below 20,000 for the first time in a year with property and commodity trades taking a big hit. Goldman Sachs downgraded the property sector from neutral to underperform and the bourse slumped 6 percent. The Nikkei dropped to a 5 1/2-month low on fears that a US recession would adversely affect exports and Sony fell to a three-year low. Prices, job and recession are all on the decline and this also affects the property market. The Reserve Bank's central bank cut its interest rate for the first time in seven years amid signs that the nation's $40 billion economy is slowing. Retail sales had their biggest slump in six years and business confidence is waning.

The only hope lies with China where workers are plentiful, cash and a public works spending spree to keep the economy growing at a sustainable 9 percent, down from an unsustainable 11.1 percent. The government is allowing holders of bonds to swap them for equities, which have plummeted 63 percent this year. There are also exports of a 4000 billion yuan stimulus package, which will include 220 billion yuan of spending and 150 billion yuan of tax cuts. China has singled spending on railways to 300 billion yuan and the current five-year plan calls for lowering 4.6 trillion yuan on power stations, airways, roads and infrastructure projects. This is more than Taiwan, Vietnam and Thailand combined.

China will also help demand for commodities and is the biggest consumer of coal, steel, aluminum, iron ore, nickel ore, copper and natural rubber. "Raw demand in China is going to be very strong for decades," said the CEO of BHP.

The local market has not been greatly affected and is still above its low for the year despite continuing and increasing foreign selling. One day, the net selling reached P640 million, a third of gross turnover. Institutional and government-controlled pension funds appear to be supporting the market. Intervention by the central bank prevented the peso from hitting 47 last Friday. They will not disturb the prevailing trend but will act in orderly volatility.

After receiving my overseas results, way off the scale, checked and rechecked, I am now in the mood to write jokes.

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Marts . . .

Area page B2

But Bautista said the overall mood remained favorable vs the dollar, with the local foreign exchange market still likely to target 47.12 over the near-term.

Trading was upbeat across the region's currency and stock markets yesterday after mortgage firms Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae—which either own or guarantee about half of the United States' $12 trillion mortgage market—were placed by the government in conservatorship.

The country's main share stock index also gained 3.61 points to close at 3,708.55 yesterday.

Credit watchdog Standard & Poor's affirmed on Aug. 29 its "A4" rating on both Manila Mas and Freddie Mac, saying that US government has clearly reinforced its support for the two government-sponsored enterprises.

Meanwhile, Fitch Ratings said in a special report yesterday that capital inflows to Asia were starting to slow down given the heightened risk aversion of global investors and the deteriorating economic fundamentals of the region along with the global economy.

"While capital market flows are bound to be volatile, Fitch doubts the proposition of 'this decoupling' and believes the sensitive capital market flows could be the barometer to FDI (foreign direct investment) and loan flows," said Fitch director in charge of regional credits Penny.

The "this decoupling" theory referred to expectations that the fast-growing Asian region could keep its strong growth momentum even if the rest of the world weakens.

Peso/Dollar Exchange Rates

(As of September 8, 2008)

Country	Bank	Buying (Customer)	Selling (Customer)	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	47.7500	47.9000	48.0000
Japan	Yen	0.4461	0.4481	0.4501
United Kingdom	Pound	1.7484	1.7600	1.7716
Hong Kong	Dollar	6.1300	6.1500	6.1700
Australia	Dollar	44.2500	44.4000	44.5500
Canada	Dollar	44.6000	44.7500	44.9000
Singapore	Dollar	34.8000	34.9500	35.1000
Australia	Dollar	41.6000	41.7500	41.9000
Euro area	Euro	69.8000	70.0000	70.2000
Switzerland	Franc	43.2000	43.4000	43.6000
Sweden	Krona	6.5000	6.5200	6.5400
Denmark	Krone	9.3800	9.4100	9.4400
Norway	Krone	8.4500	8.4800	8.5100
New Zealand	Dollar	33.5000	33.6500	33.8000
Sweden	Krona	6.5000	6.5200	6.5400
Thailand	Baht	1.4000	1.4100	1.4200

Overseas

Country	Bank	Buying (Customer)	Selling (Customer)	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	47.7500	47.9000	48.0000
Japan	Yen	0.4461	0.4481	0.4501
United Kingdom	Pound	1.7484	1.7600	1.7716
Hong Kong	Dollar	6.1300	6.1500	6.1700
Australia	Dollar	44.2500	44.4000	44.5500
Canada	Dollar	44.6000	44.7500	44.9000
Singapore	Dollar	34.8000	34.9500	35.1000
Australia	Dollar	41.6000	41.7500	41.9000
Euro area	Euro	69.8000	70.0000	70.2000
Switzerland	Franc	43.2000	43.4000	43.6000
Sweden	Krona	6.5000	6.5200	6.5400
Denmark	Krone	9.3800	9.4100	9.4400
Norway	Krone	8.4500	8.4800	8.5100
New Zealand	Dollar	33.5000	33.6500	33.8000
Sweden	Krona	6.5000	6.5200	6.5400
Thailand	Baht	1.4000	1.4100	1.4200

New income tax rules suffer delay

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE PASSAGE OF THE IMPLEMENTING rules of the recently passed law exempting minimum-wage earners from the income tax is being delayed by debates over the date of effectivity.

"The IRR drafted by the Bureau of Internal Revenue have yet to be signed by the Secretary of Finance[,] because of concerns raised by legislators," BIR Commissioner Lilian Hefti said yesterday on the sidelines of the Senate hearing on the proposed 2007 national budget.

The BIR insists that the legislation should be effective only starting July, when President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed it into law. Legislators taking the side of taxpayers said, however, said they want it retroactive to January.

Republic Act No. 9504, besides exempting minimum-wage earners from the income tax, also raises the annual personal exemption of individual taxpayers to P50,000.

Hefti said the law, although helpful to taxpayers, would adversely affect government's ability to meet its tax collection target for the year.

The impact on tax collection would be worse if the law would be effective starting January, the BIR chief added.

Congress, however, wants the law to be effective starting January to ease the pain of many taxpayers.

Lawmakers said that although the law was only signed into law in July, the intention was to make it effective starting January to provide taxpayers some relief from the sharp increase in prices of fuel and food.

Hefti said, however, that the BIR drafted the law's IRR in such a way that the income tax perks for individuals would only be effective starting July to avoid huge foregone revenue.

Hefti estimated that the government would lose P26 billion in tax collection if RA 9504 would be made effective starting January.

The Department of Finance earlier estimated that the law would result only in P19 billion worth of foregone revenues.

But Hefti said the DOF's estimate was conservative.

Hefti added that the passage of RA 9504 was not taken into account when the government set the BIR's tax collection target of P903 billion for this year.

Lawmakers raised their concerns to the Department of Finance, another agency of the BIR, making Finance Secretary Margarito Teves delay the signing of the law's IRR.

Hefti said she would meet with Teves and some taxpayers this week to put an end to the debate and finally have the IRR signed.

Besides the income tax law, Hefti said, the recently Personal Equity and Retirement Act (Pera) is also seen to ding down the government's tax collection.

The passage of Pera this year was also not take into account when the BIR's collection goal was set, she said.

DOF estimates that the government could lose P11.83 billion in potential tax collection from the first year of implementation of Pera.

The law exempts savings, as it provides tax incentives to individuals who will put up their own personal retirement accounts.

Employees who will contribute to their workers' retirement accounts are also allowed to deduct contributions from their corporate income tax liabilities.

Philex yields ₱977M in gold, copper

By Amy R. Remo

LISTED FIRM PHILEX MINING CORP. TUESday reported that it produced this month P977 million worth of gold and copper from its mining operations in Benguet.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Philex chief and CEO Walter W. Brown said that during the month, 732,599 dry metric tons of copper and gold ore were delivered by the mine and treated at the firm's Bulanjo flotation facilities.

The ban resulted in 6,333 dry metric tons (DMT) of copper concentrates averaging 24.34 percent copper, 56.76 grams a DMT of gold and 34.95 grams a DMT of silver.

Brown said this volume has equivalent metal contents of 1,509 million kilograms (3,326 million pounds) of copper; 361,964 grams (11,637 ounces) of gold; and 398,132 grams (10,071 ounces) of silver.

For this year, Philex mining has earmarked an exploration budget of P624 million.

Of this amount, P322 million will go to Philex Gold while the remaining P302 million will be allocated for the Padcal mine operations.

The Padcal mine is estimated to last for six more years or until 2014.

Philex said that it was also in the process of setting up an exploration office in Madagascar and continue to evaluate and explore mining prospects in other countries.

These include Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Australia, Myanmar, Solomon Islands, Hungary, Laos and Cambodia.

"Our thrust is to assure our shareholders of life as a mining company after 2014. Based on the results of our ongoing exploration projects and joint ventures, we are confident that we are making good progress in this regard," Brown said.

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DA sets aside additional P4B to aid small farmers

Cash perks may spur government units to spend

By Michelle V. Ramos

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES THAT ARE ABLE to spend their entire budget next year will be picked of time caught to be given monetary rewards, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves proposed.

According to Teodoro, the economic spending by the first half was ill-timed given the need to pump-prime the economy to cushion the adverse effects of high inflation.

Teves, echoing the statements of other economic managers, said underspending in the first half was caused by failure of some agencies to committee their respective budget.

If agencies were to be given incentives for spending, he said, the government would easily achieve the goal of pump-priming.

While some agencies were having a difficult time spending their budget because of various procurement procedures, others were simply not encouraged to spend much. This is because, Teves said, agencies benefit from underspending.

Under current practice, Teves explained, a portion of savings from unspent budget of line agencies would be used to grant bonuses to employees.

"It may be advisable to provide some incentives so that line agencies would increase their capacity to spend," Teves told reporters in an interview following the budget hearing at the Senate yesterday.

The finance chief formally signed his proposal on the incentives during the hearing.

Sen. Edgardo Angara questioned Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. about the relatively weak spending in the first half, which was contrary to earlier pronouncements by economic managers that the government intended to spend both of the national budgets in the first half to pump-priming purposes.

In response, Andaya said the budget department has already disbursed much of the full-year budget of line agencies. It just so happened that the agencies were slow in spending them, he said.

Fund part of tranche generated from expanded VAT collection

By Amy R. Remo

AN ADDITIONAL P6 BILLION from the third tranche of the expanded value-added tax collection may be used to provide financial assistance to small farmers, according to Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

Yap said the funds that were generated from the VAT collections on oil would be used to bankroll the third stage of the government's assistance package to various sectors.

The government is currently finalizing the new set of programs to extend aid to families and sectors severely affected by the rising cost of living, the agriculture chief said.

Under the "Kaya ng VAT" program launched earlier this year, the government hopes to fund power subsidies, scholarships and student loans, conversion of public utility vehicles to run on natural gas and other projects that will benefit the poor.

The initial allotment for the "Kaya ng VAT" program was set at P4 billion.

The additional tranche, which is so announced to P4 billion, was used to fund subsidies for small power users, the rehabilitation of infrastructure affected by typhoons, livelihood and loan packages for spouses and beneficiaries relatives of transport workers, and the upgrade of personnel hospitals. The second tranche also covered cash assistance extended to senior citizens not covered by pension funds.

According to the Department of Agriculture, the P4 billion from the third tranche of collections will augment the existing funds collected under the program earlier this year.

The initial fund was used to partly subsidize government diesel prices at P10.25 per liter, in order to stabilize the cost of this staple, especially for low-income families. For this year, the subsidies are expected to reach P20 billion by year-end.

The DA net only relies on E-Vat collections, it is also working for the speedy release of P4 billion in unpaid guaranteed from the extraction of natural gas at the Malampaya field off Palawan. The amount, according to Yap, will fund the national government's food security programs.

Yap had said that the P4-billion Malampaya fund would be one of the sources of capital that the government would tap to ease the rural credit squeeze, thus allowing farmers and other small farm borrowers to gain access to credit with which to boost agricultural production and raise their incomes.

On top of these funds, the President has also ordered the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines to set aside a P7-billion guarantee fund to enable small farmers and fisherfolk to avail of loans to procure farm production inputs.

Also, the DA is waiting for the release of close to P400 million, representing 5 percent of the net increase of government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) for lending to rural banking institutions.

"The amount ... will make up the Agricultural Guarantee Fund Pool (AGFP), an initiative of the President to [provide credit] to farmers and other small rural borrowers," Yap said.

A way in a merger

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bernal III

GOSSIP AROUND IN BANKING CIRCLES were rumors about the soon-to-e-thrown "merger" of three lightweight but well-known local banks.

They are, according to rumors, BDO Unibank and Philippine National Bank (PNB).

All three banks have been lingering for the longest time, somewhere in the middle of the ranking of banks here.

Not the past 20 years, the Banko trend—as a matter of policy—has been encouraging bank mergers and acquisitions.

For those three banks hardly had any appetite for bank acquisition or merger.

Only Union Bank bought another bank last year, which was Chinabank (International Bank), which was nevertheless somewhere down there in the ranking.

In contrast, the top three banks in the country—namely, Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. (Metrobank), Bank of the Orient (BOC), and Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI)—have been acquiring banks.

Each of those three banks in the rumored "merger" (although "consolidation" may be the proper rendered word) would not even come close to one-half of the size of the top three.

Together though, they can catapult themselves to No. 4 or No. 3—depending on whether you include or exclude government bank Land Bank of the Philippines in the equation.

But the speculation in banking circles actually centers on, if there is really a way for these banks to unite themselves as one, which bank will be the survivor entity.

I called my contact in BOC top management, and he said he didn't know of any formal talks on such a consolidation.

In fact, the bank has been busy piecing people all over the place, in an attempt to regroup after years of being mulled by its huge real estate assets culled BOC Centre.

As for BOC, talk was that the San Miguel country's biggest food and beverage conglomerate, San Miguel Corp., was serious in tracking the bank with hundreds of millions of pesos in fresh capital.

Question: Will the San Miguel people head over control of the consolidated bank, or will it happen, to the urban gossipers' favorite.

I just know the San Miguel top guys always go for control in any business.

* * *

UNEXCITED: a short note from a guy named Jean Francisco Mupa, and it reads:

"Regarding you column 'Server RICE' last Tuesday (Sept. 2, 2008), I just wish to point out an inaccuracy regarding the "first ever cruise ship."

"I believe the distinction goes to the MV Doña Montserrat, which pioneered cruising in our islands and runs in operation with Negros Navigation Co. from the mid-to-late 1970s.

"My late father, Innocent L. Mupa, was SVP at Nenasco at the time and headed that particular project, and I was privileged to ride on this fine vessel on occasions of occasions."

I stand corrected. I do remember the MV Doña Montserrat, because as a neophyte reporter, I was the first to report that Nenasco was finally giving up on the founding cruise ship venture, and that it was selling the vessel to a foreign group, which was going to use it—where else—in another country. It was done my first by hand report.

* * *

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System, or GSIS, is giving out "emergency" loans to its members in Greater City on-the-Bay.

Yes, I mean the GSIS' way of helping victims of recent raging typhoons.

Now, does it mean the GSIS was not giving loans to the members in the rest of Cavite province because a calamity unknown spared those areas from the typhoons?

Anyway, the GSIS also extended emergency loans to its members in the provinces of Tarpaldan and Marinduque, to the cities of Las Piñas and Lucena, in the municipalities of Bamyan, Mobolfie, Santa Fe, and Madrideja (all in Cebu), and in the municipalities of Pingo, Sariaya, and Candelaria (in Quezon province).

But the fund also set a deadline for the filing of applications, which is this Friday, Sept. 12, 2008.

GSIS members in those areas may apply for the loans through the GSIS Wireless Automated Processing System, or what is known by its 56-inch name of "G-WAPS," hustle all over the country.

Or the members may apply directly at the GSIS' head office or any of their areas officially declared as "calamity areas."

It is a soft loan, actually, carrying a yearly interest of only 8 percent, payable in three years through salary deduction of less than P700 a month.

I mean, it is bad news for the gamblapse and the loan sharks, isn't it?

ROUNDUP

Oilfall taps Filipino crew

SHIPMENT SHIPPED CONSIGNMENT

Oilfall Ltd. a shipping firm now takers on per year. It is also hiring Filipino crew members for its tankers.

Kjell Arne Johansen, the company's representative to the Philippines, said at the launch of Oilfall's new building in Manila that each tanker weighed almost 300,000 deadweight tons and cost around $80 million.

About 25 crew members are needed per tanker and Oilfall will hire mostly its seafarers in the Philippines, Johansen said.

The company is spending $100,000 to 130 Lasbi schools in a campus in Nasugbu City and the 25 cadets undergoing one-year seaboard training.

In the meantime, the company inaugurated on Monday its administrative hub in Manila. The facility at the Manila Bay Resort Hotel campus all crewing-related activities such as recruitment and hiring, crew processing and dispatch, crew allotment, and crew compliance and career management. Arian C. Gonzalez

Insular Life's 'green' Cebu hub

INSULAR Life Assurance Co. Ltd. recently broke ground for its new corporate hub in Cebu, the Insular Life Cebu Business Center.

The JT Mallonca & Associates-designed "green building" is a 12-story structure that will be put up at the Cebu Business Park and will feature rainwater greenery and landscaped roofing gardens.

Vicente P. Ayllón, Insular Life chair and CEO, said during the groundbreaking ceremony: "The building represents our vote of confidence in the progress of the Philippine economy and, more importantly, our faith in the Filipino's wealth of talents."

All Asia gets $1-M credit line

ALL ASIA Investment Systems Inc. has secured a $1-million credit line to support its application for a digital TV license from the National Telecommunications Commission.

Ana Bing with the NTC, All Asia has expressed interest in establishing a digital TV broadcast system in Cebu City. It said it was capable of financing such a project.

All Asia told the NTC that the credit line would come from Asian Alliance Investment Corp.

"In addition, we can likewise give support to All Asia in the form of services," the investment bank said.

Asian Alliance said it could serve as lead manager or arranger for any loan syndication for the company.

The company offers various services including financial advisory, equity and debt underwriting, loan syndication and arrangement.

Rosa D. Olivarez

GIVING AN — Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap exchanges views as the rehabilitated Pampanga-Bongabon River irrigation system with Senator Former Peping Lorenzo during its inauguration held recently at the PARLEJO, Bongabon City. The P448.131 million rehabilitated irrigation system will service nine cities and eight municipalities in Nueva Ecija covering a total area of 23,881.24 hectares with 19,151 beneficiaries.

Bosch-Samsung JV investing $400M in battery venture

By Abigail L. Ho

SB LIMOTIVE CO. LTD., A PARTNERSHIP between South Korea's Samsung SDI and Germany's Bosch Group, will invest $300 million to $400 million in the next five years to manufacture lithium-ion battery systems for vehicles.

In a statement, the joint venture said SB LiMotive started operating last week, and was set to market its jointly developed batteries worldwide in 2011.

The production of these lithium-ion batteries for vehicles would allow the joint venture to make hybrid vehicles a commercially viable option for motorists, the statement said.

Siegfried Dienstag Scheider, president of Bosch's gasoline systems division, said the joint venture first would capitalize on Samsung's know-how in lithium-ion technology and Bosch's expertise in automotive technology.

He said the lithium-ion batteries were the key technology for the use of electric motors in vehicles.

Bosch had been working on electrical traction technologies for automobiles for more than 20 years now, giving it a clear edge in the areas of battery, electrical drive and brake management, as well as in engine management and transmission control, he said.

He added that Bosch had already built a broad portfolio of components, including powerful electric motors, the necessary power electronics, and DC/DC converters.

Right now, Bosch's main focus was on the concept of the parallel hybrid—a technology where modular components could be customized to suit the requirements of individual original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and their models.

Bosch had already gotten its first orders for both gasoline and diesel hybrids, he said.

SB LiMotive is located in South Korea, manned by around 100 personnel that will use to the production of lithium-ion cells.

A Stuttgart, Germany-based subsidiary will also be established, where around 40 individuals will tackle the sales, marketing, and system engineering aspects of the business.

The joint venture had yet to announce the manufacturing sites for the battery systems, however.

Bosch expects hybrid and electric vehicles to have a more than 2-percent share of the market by 2015, by which time the joint venture says three million hybrids plying the streets of different countries all over the world.

PNOC-EC shuts down natural gas plant

PNOC EXPLORATION CORP., a subsidiary of Philippine National Oil Co., has ceased operating the 3-component San Antonio gas-fired power plant in Batangas.

After 14 years of providing power to about 16,000 households in the province, the plant was permanently shut down on July 31, with the official decommissioning rites held on Aug. 29.

The same firm decided to close down the plant when the pressure of the natural gas well fell below the required level pressure of the generation facility.

This means that the well could no longer supply enough gas to keep the plant running, PNOC EC said in a statement.

During its 14-year run, PNOC-EC said the San Antonio plant produced a total of 307.46 gigawatt hours of electricity, while the gas well generated a total of 3.54 billion cubic feet of natural gas.

PNOC-EC said this translated to P8.13 million in income taxes and P93.9 million in royalties, which were divided among the national government, through the Department of Energy, the province of Batangas, the municipality of Ibaan, and Barangays San Manuel and San Antonio.

The gas from the San Antonio gas field was equivalent to 613,000 barrels of oil, resulting in around $21 million in foreign currency savings due to displaced oil imports.

While the power plant had already been decommissioned, PNOC-EC said it could still take advantage of the residual gas from the San Antonio well by selling this as a third party. Abigail L. Ho

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LIFESTYLE Wellness
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

ENDURANCE Ironman Fred Uytengsu

FERNANDO Zaldarriaga competes in the bike segment of the triathlon

Crossing the line

Triathlon separates the strong from the weak

WARREN Winner Squires cools off after the race.

By Luna Cuepo

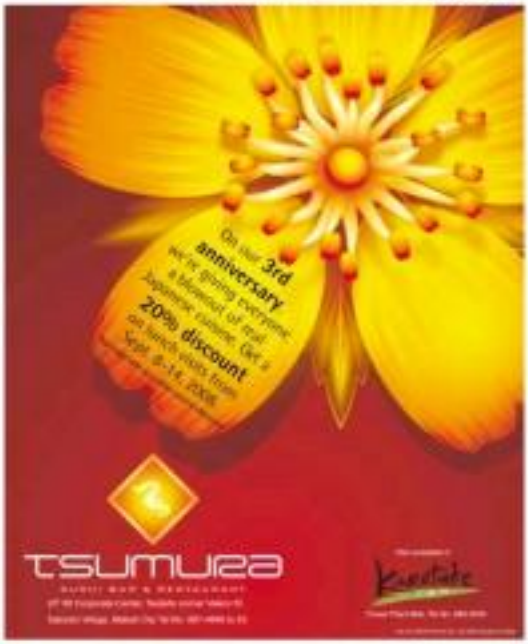
NOT ALL RACES ARE CREated equal. Celebrity photographer Jun de Leon and his team (RJ Esteban, Liz Esteban, Ed Silva, Jed Santos, Carlos Palma and Leo Castillo) discovered it the hard way.

Some races require more stamina, skill, strength and grit. This applies not just to race participants, but to photographers covering the event as well. De Leon and his team were "on call" from 4 a.m. till the last athlete crossed the finish line at 6 p.m. They ate their meals while on the run and bathroom breaks had to be accomplished in record time, if at all.

Unlike marathon or cycle race, triathlon requires one to master three separate disciplines: swimming, bicycling and running. Covering this type of race requires well-conceived logistics, truckload of equipment and in some cases, a "wet suit." It's the type of race that separates the strong from the weak.

Triathlon is not merely about physical endurance but mental toughness as well.

CONTINUED 12



A MAN and his bike

BIKES await riders in transition area.

TOP FINALIST Kristen Bergsma Heidenberger hugs a friend after the race.

Just One Treatment Guarantees 2cm Waist Reduction

Frustrated and tired of doing strenuous workouts because your bulging belly won't budge? Most medical experts agree that the main function of ab exercises is to tone the muscles, not to eliminate a significant amount of fat. So even if you're doing a lot of crunches, chances are your hard work may not be enough to remove your stubborn fat.

What every man should know is that there's a faster, easier and more effective Just-Belly Beater - ULTRASHAPE.

With Ultrashape, all you have to do is just comfortable lie down and completely relax while losing excess inches off your waist. It works by using ultrasound waves that are applied from outside the tummy, which penetrate and "melt away" the targeted fat without damaging tissues or blood vessels. The liquefied fat are absorbed into the blood stream and flushed from the body through natural processes. One treatment session allows you to drop - 2cm off your waist - giving you a flatter belly until you reach your desired size. Without you doing any strenuous workout!

What's even better is that, unlike surgical procedures, Ultrashape is a non-invasive method of tummy flattening. You can even catch up on your sleep or read some news while undergoing the treatment. Absolutely no anesthesia required. You can resume your normal activities immediately after the treatment because there's absolutely no downtime! So quick and easy, you can have a dating your lunch break or spare time.

Ultrashape has been tested and proven effective. In fact, many men are amazed with how this treatment has helped them lose their gut and made them look, feel and live better!

Ultrashape is available at Marie France FOR MEN. Phone for NEAT/FAT body-fat analysis. All consultations are carried out in private. Call 813-7959 now and get a flatter tummy in no time!

Ill-mannered designer makes a scene at fashion event

SHANGRI-LA MAKATI'S LOBBY WAS packed like a can of sardines, pedestrian, when the super popular Nokia Fashion Week, already on its third season, was held Tuesday and Thursday, 4:30 p.m.

"Nokia is proud to associate itself with the Philippines' best and brightest designers," said popular **William Hamilton-Whyte**, business general manager, Nokia Philippines. "Designing a mobile phone shares the same philosophy as fashion designers, which are influenced by current trends, personality based preferences of the consumer."

Abi noticed during the show of Jojo Llanes that there was this unsung designer

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arnache

Photos by Alex van Hoppe using **YSL** Pirate Eyeshadow

or two from our corner] who had nowhere to sit so he slumped himself into an empty chair while the occupant was in the ladies room.

He refused to leave till the society hostesses literally told him, "Will you please leave! You're in my seat," which he did reluctantly. This designer should be sent back to school to learn good manners, if ever.

The country's best designers, paluggers, showcased their latest collections that excited and delight fashionistas. Rich fabrics, hues and craftsmanship were evident in the evening pieces, dubbings. The chi-chi high tea crowd can't seem to get enough of the clothes and Nokia, natch!

Night of power and pleasure

Do you remember the line of Uncle Ben to "Spiderman": "With great power comes great responsibility"? Well, paluggers, that's how it felt that night when mega executives of the corporate world gathered for an event at the hard as lava Ayala Land. The company introduced another baby simply called Arvo, an eye catching 39-storey residential condominium. The Gallery at the ever chic Greenbelt 5 was the venue for the exclusive preview of this new development in capital village, Makati.

Our town's A-listers had a great night of good food, excellent wine and scintillating music. Seen in presence of the good life, dubbings. Leading the pack were Ayala Land's forefront Bobby Ty, head of the residential business group; senior vice president Ben Mendoza; and Dan Almeda, president of Alveo Land.

SUPERSTAR designers, Prince of chic made him fame Barao and talented tall queen Lala Tan Gan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo with one of the designers of the afternoon tea, Ivo Caruso

LIZBETH Campos, Tali Rosen and Cristine Rosa

STUNNING, gorgeous eye-catchers Zelda and Jessica Kienle

ALVEO Land's president Dan Almeda; division manager for project development Hong Ruppe; interior designer for Studio Arenas "Tuesie" Mendoza; interior designer and entrepreneur Ana Ramos; and Apodaca and senior vice president Rey Mendoza, witness the super grand unveiling of Arvo at The Gallery in Greenbelt 5.

ALVEO Land gang of four: Marketing officer Martin Centeno, division manager for marketing Eunice Acuna, sales division manager Jun Rosas and project division manager Gene Gutierrez

DEBORMACLANG Marketing Communications Inc.'s Amor Maclang with **Six Degrees'** Michelle Barreiro and Rocky Torres

ALVEO Land head for design and innovation architect Gilbert Borlaza; Alveo Land senior architects Mita Mendiola; Bob Emphremson; and Michael Bacsal of Crone Partners Architecture Studios

WCE president for marketing and sales Robert Lee

FRANK Briones and Pepper Trinidad are visit-ted, gorgeous-looking Brazilian models

YOUNG Tinidoan dynamic president Frank Briones celebrates 12 years of his achieving life with Mr. World 2007 runner-up drop-dead good-looking Lucian Gil

MAJO Laurel (center) with her Lauren Hermano and his mother Bebot Laurel

MICHELLINE Soares and Joanna Poyzian Francisco

MARITINA and Liz Gomez

ALVIN Dimagiba and Patrick Ty

JOEY Samson and Rosario Salonga

Frank Briones' birthday

It was definitely the most fun birthday bash of the week, paluggers, when Tito, Vic, Joey's young dynamic achiever Frank Briones celebrated his 33rd birthday, dubbings. It was held at Renaissance Hotel Makati's Bar Lounge. That night, it was only patrons that are intimates and beautiful crowd rooms a successful party.

Quote-unquote Bethanikee on the celebrant's birthday, "33 is conditions year!" The birthday boy answered, "I would love to be cruelled that night with beautiful guests, loyal clients and good friends."

Having a real great time while showing their house were **John Bellisario** of Paco Models along with his battalion of hot Brazilian models; Jojo Sangcang; model-turned interior designer **Andrea Rhodes**; super talented **Rhett Eala**; Lifestyle Asia's **Bridal Ng**; couple **Ana Kalaw** and **Ali Peek**.

Thinking's top clients include Maria Alfonsa of DFS; **Lal Gupwani** of Brandcel Lifestyle, Inc., distributor of global fashion international top eyewear and accessories brands like Ray-Ban, Prada and Bvlgari; Rishi Mirani of New Trends and Ferrahgos Jewellers, distributors of The Natural Source, Uncut and YSL eyewear; Iris Margit Encinets from Cocoa and Olga Antonova from the renowned bubbly and brandy, Hennessy.

And remember, we must not forget Edwin Macapagal, the popular manager of Renaissance Hotel Chamber for providing a really easy venue.

To our pal, Frank Briones, you must never grow old at heart!

Cheers, paluggers!

AMOTHER birthday boy, Wesley Villaruz with preppy women Ginger Conejo and Reena Sarmiento

ELAN Hotels International's Cecille Carpio and Renaissance Hotel Chamber manager Edwin Macap

BASKETBALL star Ali Peek and Ana Kalaw

HQIT Hennessy mover and shaker mega chief Olga Asarcon and Reena Espaldon!

JAMES Youngblood and mentor gorgeous Joyce Ramirez

CDOL newsmen Hal Labucayenbi and L'Oreal's Texas Dragon

KAH-BAH, hot Tinidoan team Jandrea Ignacio, Jamil Akbar, Fidyo Lumicao, Debbie Feldman and Joel Catapang

HDI with the celebrant's friends, Cristy, Queenie and his mother Dolores Briones

The ultimate weight control tool

By Mitch Pelipe
Contributor

NUMEROUS STUDIES ON effective weight management show that journaling is one of the most important components of weight control and maintenance programs. Self-monitoring is the heart of lifestyle modification.

Identify how much realistic weight you need to lose in the next three or six months, or one year. Which other areas in your lifestyle do you want to improve on? It can either be controlling food intake, increasing physical activities, improving sleep or decreasing alcohol consumption.

You can use any type of monitoring tool for your day-to-day activities. Some weight loss clinics I know would always bring a mini notebook, others note on their hand like subtle some uses the details in their cell phones.

Physical improvements

During many of your body composition regains some improvements. Continue to maintain your current programs. For instance, if you lower your weight loss a more or much less, this would encourage you to do more weight training aside from cardio exercises to preserve or increase muscle mass responsible for decreasing body fat and increasing metabolism.

● Record your weight once a week. But according to a study in Annals of Internal Medicine, participants that is more effective to weigh to one a frequent basis, more than once a week. Consider other factors for weight fluctuations like time of day, water retention, hormonal changes and increase to lean mass as a result of exercise.

● Aside from weight, get a record of your fat percentage once a month or every two months so you know you are on the right track when it comes to weight loss. For men, aim not more than 24% body fat, and not more than 31% for women. Body fat analyzers are usually available at health clubs and drugstores.

● Measure your waist at least once or twice a month to monitor your health status. Waistline measurement is known to have significance to one's susceptibility to health risk factors like diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, waist circumferences of greater than 40 inches in men and 35 inches in women are strong indicators of abdominal obesity.

Food intake and physical activities

According to a recent study published this month in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, participants who list down their food intakes but twice as much weight in six months compared to those who did not keep a food journal.

● Record a daily detailed food intake by including amount, quality (fried, boiled, sautéed, etc.), time and location of eating so you will be aware of triggers which cause you to overeat. For example, finishing a big bag of chips was triggered by late night eating with your kids while watching television.

● Record your water intake to ensure you from consuming high-calorie beverages like sodas, iced tea and other flavored drinks. This also ensures you are well-debriefed and during the day.

● If becoming alcohol consumption is one of your goals, write down the total amount of beer and hard drinks consumed every drinking session, and compare the total amount every week.

● Record the meal/number of capacity during a performance to track down how active you are during the day. This assesses for significant weight loss or maintenance. You can do this on a daily or weekly basis. If you lack unstructured exercises, aim for more than 10,000 steps a week to lose weight.

● Use a calorie counter, write down the average heart rate, total duration and level and average speed done. For weight training, make sure you have a copy of your exercise programs to monitor your strength progress.

Sleep

Findings presented to the 2008 American Thoracic Society International Conference show that women who sleep five hours or less per night weigh more than those who get at least seven hours of sleep.

The weight gain was due to the slashing down of metabolism and increase in overeating and frequent cravings since the ghrelin (hormone responsible for feelings of hunger) levels increase and leptin (hormone which tells your brain when it's time to stop eating) levels decrease.

● Getting sufficient sleep of more than six hours per night is as important as controlling food intake and increasing physical activities in managing weight. Write down the amount of sleep that you get daily so you'll be aware or in effect to your weight, eating behavior and energy level during the day.

● Identify factors which cause you to sleep late or wake up early and think of ways to manage it. Experts suggest limiting late night television viewing and other mass activities like playing computer games and late night parties.

● Those individuals who incorporated physical activities in their daily routine reported better sleeping habits.

E-mail the author at mitchlpe@gmail.com

Crossing the line

From page C1

to bars, just signing up for a triathlon competition, whether it be for the shorter "standard distance" (1,500-km swim, 40-km bike, 10-km run) or the longer "Ol' distance" (3.8-km swim, 120-km bike to 30-km run—almost Ironman distance), already defines the person as someone willing to undergo some degree of pain.

How far one can push the body before it breaks? How much torture can one handle in a span of two to six hours?

Ideal opportunity

Dr. Lenn's team chose to shoot the 5th Asian/Ol Long Distance Triathlon as Subic Bay Freeport, because it was an ideal opportunity to capture the greatness of the Subic spirit.

How they realized that high-tech gear (e.g. Speedo LZR suit, Adidas race flats, Cervelo bikes or Oakley shades) will not help an athlete, especially one who does not respect the distance enough to put in the necessary training time, or who loses focus when things go wrong (e.g. leaking oranges, equipment malfunction and accidents).

This race is more than about rough conditions (scorching heat, monsoon weather or slippery roads). It's also not about the competition (literally dusty between Hanna First and 9000-50). The most important is the athlete and his willingness to push his body to its limits.

Every race athlete knows that victory is more than about one's time record. It's how you run the race and what it took to get you there.

The camera does not lie. So raises the script, editing, director and acting, view the images of adrenalin, pain, will power, solving muscles and fighting spirit.

For more info on race results and calendar, visit www.multisa.org.ph.

THE CHAMPION. He's the first out of the water.

INSURANCE SUPPORTS THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM'S EVENT - EMBRACING HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THE HEART OF ASIA Present during the contract signing between the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Department of Tourism are (from left) Product Proponent Joyce Alumno, PDI AVP and Marketing Director Jovel Salvador, Department of Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano and DOT Usec. for Sports and Wellness Cynthia Carreon

There's such a thing as spirit possession

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

THE INCIDENTS OF SPIRIT possession which affected 20 students in a public high school in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro, as reported in two news items in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Aug. 24 and Sept. 4) caught my attention.

According to the first news item, classes have been suspended since early August "due to successive episodes of students falling into seizures." Education Sec. Jesli Lapus sent a medical team to determine if there was a medical explanation for and solution to such incidents.

Despite the intervention of Catholic priests and local healers, however, the cases of possession continued and the school authorities appealed for help from experts.

Affected students pointed to evil spirits angered by the making of a 30- to 40-year-old tree at the back of the campus building," according to the second news item by Madonna Virola. But, according to the school principal, Henry Rempit, this happened three or four years ago.

The second news item quoted a psychiatrist from the National Center of Mental Health, Dr. Maria Arlene Bautista, who explained the incidents were merely a case of mass hysteria. She said, "The victims have weak personalities and hold pent-up anxieties. Their psychological distress is channeled into physical symptoms like general weakness, seizures, dizziness, headaches and shortness of breath." She considered the incidents to be mere "psychosomatic rebellion," intended "to get people's attention."

Speaking to psychiatric lingo, she explained that "the symptoms included a trance-like state, stereotypic act of rebellion known as histrionics, and psychomotor agitation in which pent-up anxieties built over a long period of time result in disruptions to the nervous or synapses that send messages to the muscles, triggering temporary bouts of trembling, spasms and shaking."

Her solution: "To educate the public not to be afraid. If possessed, let the student rest for one to two days, and get her or him back to school." She also advised the public to stop saying "sinusawi (acting)" and "sinapian (possessed)" to the victims.

She attributed the incidents simply to culture and to the weakness of the victims' personalities. She did not say they were caused by spirits.

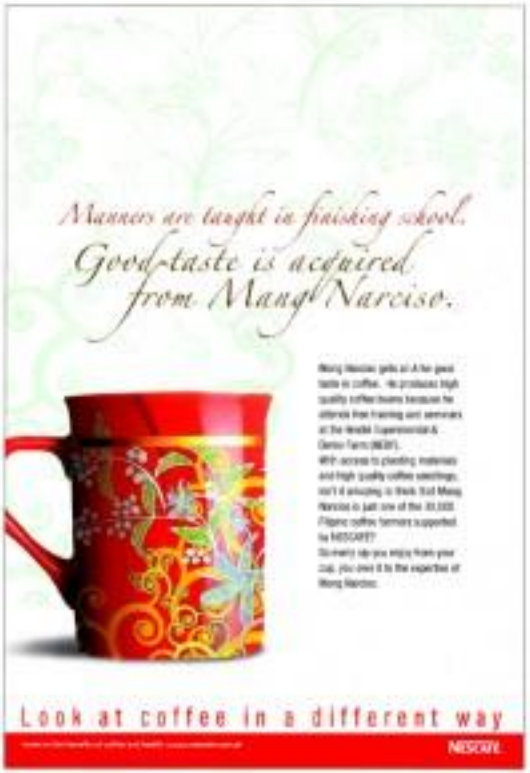
Fr. Joe Sibella of Divine Word College in Calapan had a more practical suggestion. He said, "Experts of different fields should get into the picture because it would not just be about problematic students." One of the victims is his goddaughter with whom he talks when his parents are away.

Exercise priests

Well, I have news for you Monsignor Sibella and other western-trained scientific minds: There is such a thing as spirit possession and this fact is well-established in Church history and the Christian Bible itself. In fact, there is even an office in the Church's doctrinal hierarchy called "exorcist priests." And truth in office or position is only given by a Bishop. And the task of the exorcist priest is "to cast out evil spirits" from persons and dwelling houses. Even Jesus Christ performed such exorcisms on individuals possessed by evil spirits. Unfortunately, spirit possession is not found in any standard medical book in this country.

No amount of education or public information, as Dr. Briones suggested, will drive out evil spirits from a person who is possessed. And no medical drug has yet been invented or discovered that will cure a possessed person. What the school needs is the help of a good, strong and knowledgeable exorcist or healer who can cast out the spirit and protect the students from being invaded again. The school premises should also be cleansed of negative entities of whatever type. If the school in Calapan or the Secretary of Education, Jesli Lapus, is interested we have a Dictator-test Services Group, composed of experts and we can assist. Unless officially requested, we do not and cannot intervene in any manner at all.

Note: The next Soulmusic, Karma & Reincarnation seminar will be held Sept. 13, 1 to 7 p.m. and then 15 Sept. 20 to 21, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Rm. 308 Metro Plaza, Edsa, cor. Taft Ave., Pasay. For more info, call 851-7240/ 482-4400, fax 851-9898, e-mail: jtl@mailbox.ca.com.



Too much carbo loading may make you feel drowsy

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

IF YOU CAN MAKE OUT YOUR credit card, you can likewise map out your body. The question is how you can maintain a high body energy level at all times.

Here are a few tips.

Balance. Try not to focus on anything that will create imbalance. Balance work, home/family, worship and health. Dr. Gary Zukav explains in "The Heart Of The Soul" that unusual intensities in any one rank/person/object habit may be a sign of denial, running away from issues that have not been addressed for a long time.

Rest. Even if your work schedule is on the normal 9 a.m.-5 p.m. schedule, sleep is crucial to good health.

Keep calm. Keeping the lid on your mood swings helps to maintain calm. Studies show that tension have a direct effect on your health. Thus, the more happy feelings you nurture, the healthier you will become.

Get rest. The less you soak your food, the higher the nutrient content, the better absorbed your body is. Good nourishment equals more energy.

Enzyme support. Enzymes assist in digesting your food properly. Even if you eat tons of veggies, if your stomach doesn't have enough enzymes, your body will not be able to absorb everything.

Tip: Have a light serving of fruit like papaya whose enzymes are highly beneficial.

Exercise. Move your body to get your circulation going. Increased imbalance, weight and circulatory problems can be addressed with regular exercise. Moreover, it has an anti-aging effect on the body.

Good fat. Stay away from cravings and hydrogenated fats. They will weaken your immune system and eventually make you ill. Moreover, you still need fat for good metabolism. So, don't worry if your fat intake comes from vegetables or minerals. Just maintain a good balance.

To lose protein/carbohydrates. The egg is called the complete protein, the perfect food. It contains the highest percent rating of any kind of food. Packed with vitamins and minerals, it is perfect for energy production and stress management.

A diet high in carbohydrates leads to "sleeping syndrome." So, don't wonder why you feel drowsy after having a big pasta serving. Take enough carbohydrates based on your workload. If you are an active busy, cut back on your carbo load or it will become fat.

Affirm today: "I balance my life for better health."

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After a treatment session with R.E.A.M., muscles have been toned under optimal conditions. As a result, muscles become stronger and more defined. The activated muscle causes immediate circumferential reduction and leaves the client with tighter, younger and healthier looking skin.

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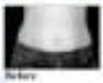
- Isometric Exercise Therapy and
- Various Treatments.



Before

After

For more info call 822-1333 or 820-8007 for more information.

GOINGS ON

Health and lifestyle expo

HEALTHWORLD EXPO '08. 19th international exhibition on hospital, diagnostic, pharmaceutical, medical, dental, rehabilitation apparatus, laboratory facilities, bio-technology, equipment and supplies, will be held Oct. 2-4 at the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City.

The show will also incorporate beauty and eye care, anti-aging products and services, exhibition of government and private hospitals, medical centers, wellness spas, health and tourism industries and international pharmaceutical manufacturing technology and services.

Healthworld Expo '08 is organized by the Department of Health, Singapore Trade Board, Drug Store Association of the Philippines, Department of Trade & Industry, Hospital Medical Laboratory Equipment & Suppliers Association of the Philippines.

For more info call MP at Unit 1102 Antel 2000 Corporate Center, 121 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City; tel. 7908686; fax 7908686; e-mail HWE@globalink.com.

Free lecture on menopause

St. Luke's Menopause Clinic presents Healthy Aging After 40 on Sept. 18. It is at 12 noon when the following will be discussed: Urinary Complaints. Why am I urinating frequently? by Dr. Marie Arlene Acuto; Digestive problems: Food that causes indigestion, Dr. Anna Victoria Espeleta; Sleeping Problems: Why am I still up late at night?, Dr. Priscilla A. Aquino; and Memory Problems: Why am I so forgetful?, Dr. Teresita C. Ilano.

The lecture is free and will be held at Auditorium 1, 13/F, Cathedral Heights Building Complex, St. Luke's Medical Center. Call 7230101 local 3400.

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ENTERTAINMENT
Editor Bonnie S. Velarde

'Idol' lands in 'House Bunny'

MAKING HER MOTION PICTURE DEBUT in the Columbia Pictures' comedy, "The House Bunny" is Katharine McPhee, Fox's ex-"Idol" 2006 runner-up. She plays Shelley, a pregnant flower child-type. "She's free spirited, which is definitely a side to my personality," the singer-actress says.

New album says where Bamboo is headed

By Pocholo Concepcion
Photos by Boyet Bolasa

THE LIGHTS GET BLINDING hot in a Makati studio where the four members of Bamboo are being photographed for the band's new album.

The sound is missed, almost solemn. The band crew and studio workers hardly speak, the silence broken only when the lensmen issue instructions to each band member.

The lensmen is given exclusive access to the proceedings, including the privilege of boarding, on an iPod, the 10 tracks from the album "Tomorrow Becomes Yesterday," due out this week from EMI Philippines.

On a break from the shoot, guitarist Ira Cruz, bassist Nathan Azarcon, drummer Vic Mercado and vocalist Francisco "Bamboo" Mañalac walk into a dressing room for a chat. It's been two months since they recorded their tracks to record the new album at Tandem in Pasig.

"Tomorrow Becomes Yesterday" is long overdue. It's been quite some time since 2004's "In the Music Player" and 2005's "Light Years Love" — two albums that enjoyed commercial success and critical acclaim on the strength of the singles "Sleepy" and "Mulholland," respectively. Those songs, which demonstrated the power of new school Pinoy rock to win racial pride and hope on the airwaves, became the springboard for much of what Bamboo has enjoyed in recent years, massive exposure through nationwide tours and high-paying product endorsement deals.

Very personal

The band got on busy touring duty, in 2005, under pressure to record another album, to make do with "We Found Home Jamboree," an all-remakes collection that nevertheless turned a lot of heads for its choice of covers: Rudded's protest folk classic "Tatahak" and Arnel Pineda's ode to country maidens, "Probinsyana."

Mañalac proceeds to give his own assessment of the new record. "Siguro po lang ako mahaba, pinagdaanan ko siya dito. ... It's so clean," he says. "Not to be specific for each song ... again I see it as a very personal album for all of us in the band ... yun ang gusto ko. ..."

Azarcon: "Mas malawak [ang album]. Isang iba lang eyes. Kasi dati yung first and second, pati third, nagkakaroon ng times na nag-ka-break talaga sila nung isang songs.

Mercado: "Hindi masyado' pinag-isipan ... alam na yung gagawin ng bawat isa sa isa't isa, total section."

"Kaiba," the first single off the album, sounds like another anthem-in-the-making, a tribute to the humanity of the Pinoy Everyman.

Mañalac: "For this album I wanted to go more detail with the lyrics ... I'm not gonna spell it out for you. Everyone should have their own personal interpretation. I'd like people to inject their own feelings and experiences into the songs. It should be that open."

Azarcon: "Kasi kung i-explain ni Bamboo yung message dun sa kanta, baka mapaliitan yung pananaw ng ibang tao. Objective lang dapat."

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Funk influences

Some of the songs have funk influences.

Azarcon: Meron ding reggae.

Mañalac has likewise loosened rap lyrics. "We're basically doing it since the first album," he explains. "Nothing wrong with that, di ba?"

Cruz: "Para hindi talaga siya nag-[as in the typical hip hop] track."

The album title, "Tomorrow Becomes Yesterday," is taken from a phrase in the fifth track, "Little Child."

Mañalac: I just like the poetry of the line. It says a lot, where we've headed and what's been happening in our lives, and also because we've come back to Day One. We did this album on turning apat ali. Unlike the last one we may grow musicians.

Does the band feel it has peaked creatively?

Mañalac: "I learned a lot of stuff while making this album. It's part of life's growth."

Cruz: Pa-take all po kayo."

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SPIN

'Ridiculous' 14-track CD

EDDIE GARCIA says he has done the "ridiculous" — producing a 14-track CD with politicians, businessmen and media personalities taking turns singing their favorite songs. But even if the album, "Patrons Singers," sounds unrehearsed at certain points (for instance, Sen. Edu Manzano's rendition of James Taylor's "If I

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GALLERIA

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2 THE CLONE WARS
3 CONGKAK
4 BABYLON A.D.
5 FOR THE FIRST TIME
6 BIG STAN
7 THE MUMMY: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor
8 IndieSine: QUICKTRIP
9 WALL • E
10 GRAVEDANCERS

ERMITA

1 OOMBOL TROMBOL
2 WALL • E
3 GRAVEDANCERS
4 BIG STAN
5 BABYLON A.D.
6 DEATH RACE
7 FOR THE FIRST TIME
8 CONGKAK
9 IndieSine: MORAL

METRO EAST

1 BIG STAN
2 WALL • E
3 FOR THE FIRST TIME
4 YOU DON'T MESS with the ZOHAN
5 GRAVEDANCERS
6 BABYLON A.D.
7 DEATH RACE
8 A VERY SPECIAL LOVE

NOVALICHES

1 DEATH RACE
2 BABYLON A.D.
3 CONGKAK
4 FOR THE FIRST TIME

PIONEER

1 DEATH RACE
2 BABYLON A.D.
3 FOR THE FIRST TIME
4 CONGKAK

STA. ROSA

1 DEATH RACE
2 ALTERED
3 MY SASSY GIRL
4 FOR THE FIRST TIME

LIPA

1 THE CLONE WARS
2 FOR THE FIRST TIME
3 ROGUE
4 PONTIANAK

DASMARINAS

1 CONGKAK
2 DEATH RACE
3 BABYLON A.D.
4 FOR THE FIRST TIME

IMUS

1 BABYLON A.D.
2 DEATH RACE
3 FOR THE FIRST TIME
4 CONGKAK

ANGELES

1 BABYLON A.D.
2 FOR THE FIRST TIME
3 THE FLOOD
4 PONTIANAK

STARMILLS

1 PONTIANAK
2 FOR THE FIRST TIME
3 GOMBOL TROMBOL
4 BOY CULTURE
5 BABYLON A.D.
6 THE FLOOD

BACOLOD

1 MOONRISE FILM FESTIVAL
2 PONTIANAK
3 FOR THE FIRST TIME
4 ROGUE
5 THE X-FILES
6 BROTHER
7 THE X-FILES
8 SAW
9 BROTHER

ILOILO

1 THE X-FILES
2 FOR THE FIRST TIME
3 ADAM and STEVE
4 WALL • E | ROGUE
5 SAW
6 BROTHER

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Paolo most sought-after bachelor

PAOLO CONTIS IS SLATED for being chosen as one of Cosmo's most sought-after bachelors. (The Cosmo bash is on Sept. 11 at A.Venue Events Hall, Makati Avenue.)

"I feel more confident now," Paolo says. "But also more concerned because I have to maintain my body or else people might think that my sexy pics are fake-bought."

His photo op with fellow nominee Kobe Bryant is real and surreal at the same time. "I just woke up and was having breakfast at hotel in Mexico," he recalls. "I thought I was still dreaming when Kobe walked in and played billiards in front of my table."

Their pic scores a thousand points in Paul's customary book.

Guess list

• A contender in a reality show is already a star's winner. "Nikolito ito ang victory-wise," notes an insider. "Para na Robelito ng near big-move nya."

The other contestants are clueless about it. So beware of what you see on reality shows. It may not be the real thing, after all.

• An aging actress endeavored to bring boxes of cheap liquor as contribution to a stag party. The birthday girl snapped back, "Pinoxxx don't. We have no room for that." Cheers and jeers!

After his Heart

Jennifer Sanders bounces back after his split up with Heart Evangelista. He's paired off with Malaysian actress Carmen Soo (6-888-C2893) "Kalut hang Sagit" soon to premiere in the Primetime Bida block.

Echo and Carmen play star-crossed lovers on this one-of-a-kind story that transcends culture, class and the odds in between. Echo is still hoping to have "Kalut hang Sagit" with his ex-lover as they can achieve closure after their messy breakup.

Is there a chance for his hometown, the town of his love child, Sanchez, to reconcile with Echo? I teased him, when I bumped into him at party. "We achieved a certain level of friendship to be able to raise our son well," he said. "We have established a mature understanding in respecting each other's boundaries. Nothing more, nothing less."

Is Echo a better father now that he's single again? "He makes it up to me now when he schedule permits. Sometimes I worry the last ones to know about their breakup because all we watch is the frames then we!"

Despite the intrigues, Ate and Echo seem to be the true parents, ever and lessened the call of duty.

We girls now

Donna Tribe would rather not elaborate on his breakup with Cristine Reyes. He's itching his attention on the first birthday of Colby, his son with Cathriee Aguilar, and his many projects lined up.

Previous gals, thumb God! Drew ano nang concentrate on his career," his indefatigable manager Popoy Caminero exclaims.

But with Donnie' charms, no girls is completely erased from the picture! What is certain will persist

Diana's watch

Diana Zubiri's multiphoto set is full of sweet photos of herself with her mom Diane Ke. Their online album comes with a complete backgrounder on how their love story blossomed.

So much it's confirmed that my actor linked to Diana is purely for publicity sake. She has found her match in an unpretentious guy who keeps her grounded yet also takes her to cloud nine.

Business venture

Eighties shoutout Bobby Valle has ventured into business. He being Manpower promo company sends cultural performers abroad and his strong Mahirap Ilayon to tin Ginoo Valle Building has the biggest ballroom dance floor in Manila. Bobby and his wife Dahlia Reynaud's next project is the Hearthil Philippine Institute Inc. (1871 Leon Guinto St. Malate), a Japanese language school specializes in care giving with guaranteed jobs in Japan (Call 525-1871). Lookit now and see high for the "Japajackpot" dream job.

Male vanity

The latest copy of Metro FHM Magazine, the Pinoy's style bible, has Manila's top male models on the cover: Victor Basa, Mikee Cardoso, Carlo Aquino and Wilbur Cuenco. It also features Wix director Emmy Zaldivia in his first interview after two decades of endeavors and an 11-page special on hair. Who says only women are vain?

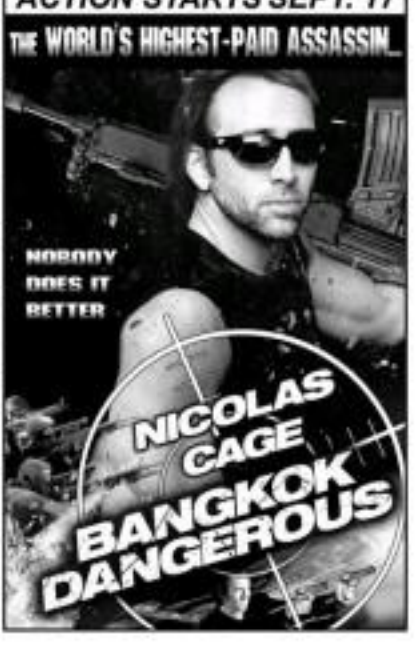
Acoustic night

For a cool Saturday night, coach Lolita Carbon, formerly of the folk band Asin and Nick Antolin in a dinner benefit show "Acoustic Night" on Sept. 13, 7 p.m. at Max's Scout Reunion, QC. (Call 661-7-757-2355.)

PERSONAL: Congrats to my dear friends Aji and Alex Fernandez for their fourth Silo Denzell's brunch (SM City Marikina, 3C and I enjoyed hosting their opening program. Love ko lahat ng tao, A.

Thanks from the bottom of my heart and Georgeous glass to Jessie Plaza, Chef Dominic Villalobos and the efficient staff of my true bungee in Greenbelt 3 (2/F) Tequila for always cooking me food so at home. (Call 757-4466 or 85.)

E-mail wainerbgbalwan@yahoo.com



GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

JL LIPAN — BY JEG MERCADO

TULDOK — BY PARIA COLL

PUSONG BABOY — BY RYAN JUNSON

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HEKKOKOSHOE — BY JOMAR TEJIDO

SALAMIN — BY DARWIN PEREZ

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEEDY — BY LIRA GARCELLANO

LOVEBUGS — BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

BINGO MACHINE — BY MANNY JUBERTAL

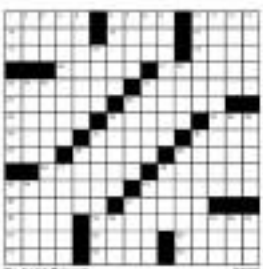
BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

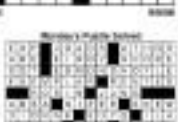
ACROSS
1 Pollute rotten
5 Electric pen
10 Electric unit
14 Computer data format
15 ACDC power
16 Fencing sword
17 Cold-weather dwelling
19 Hammer and ___
20 Shape of a tire
21 Hide darkness
22 Short theatrical offering
23 Point when developing speed in sport
24 Small cigars
27 Whole film
31 Cyber name-a-bot
32 ___ Lanka
33 Very wide shoe
34 Gallagher specialty
37 Heavenly objects
38 Jelly
39 Abbr.
40 Speaking sound
43 TV network
46 Theater employees
47 Peacekeeping recipient
48 Gangs and Kids
49 Wild Kingdom ape
50 Under control
51 Legend
52 Ambrosia
56 Damaged instrument
60 Pay less for
61 Chromosome
62 Ms. Ephron
63 "Bee ___"
64 Flag Drunk
65 Peak, Nevada
66 Ancient continent
67 Fever units

DOWN
1 Cheese-to-tapioca
2 John Dee
3 Peace Village
4 Actress Ullmann
5 Lottery before the Mini
6 Insecurity
7 Library cabinet name
8 Dolphin
9 Bit of tension
10 Team property
11 Boondaggle's cash
12 Perpetrated of a crime
13 Wine
18 Make fun of
19 Roman fifty
23 Cassette
24 Of the moon
25 Lower mid-thigh
26 Give an address
28 Cents of life
29 People in rapid motion
30 Interstate 35a hgt.
35 ___ acrobat
36 Last location
37 Actress of Sherlock Holmes
38 Monsters Inc. character
39 Wrestled
41 Justice of the Supreme Court since 1967
42 C. A. Rave station
43 Hands over
44 Lots-a Dylan
45 Softened coal
47 Hebrew fourth
50 Southern constellation
52 Sun. Monitor
53 Scream
54 Affirmative

By Justin Brewer
Saunders, PA



Monday's Puzzle Solved



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

FOR BORN TODAY Many people find you compelling enigmas. You're very private, even in relationships. You're also quite independent and a fellow introspective one. You value depth in a friendship, because you're interested in exploring the mysteries of life. Your birthstone is the moonstone. Notable people born today include Mario Batali, chef/restaurateur; Michael Bolton, singer; Indira Gandhi, politician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19). You're full of ideas with pathbreaking and come-from-left-field qualities. Don't promise anything you can't deliver, as you suspect temptation to do so, something. Don't promise anything you can't deliver.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20). Co-workers are supportive today. Invest in a good lunch. Be good, Nevertheless, when getting to deadlines or important events, err on the side of caution. Stay realistic!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20). What a wonderful day for communication! You're feeling very witty today. Be sure your jokes, words, letters and emails don't offend anyone. Be careful about drinking and eat lots of food.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22). This is a lovely day to celebrate all forms of love. Make good times with family members. You might want to buy something for your home. Keep your checkbook balanced because you could be low on cash.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22). You're full of energy and ready for action today! You could find yourself involved with someone who's also interested in working. Avoid arguments that you can't work on whatever you can't do it. Don't go out on a limb.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22). It's a wonderful day for business and romance. You're full of joy with both of these areas today. Whatever you do, could suddenly show a very successful money. Be careful!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22). You're charming today. Words and emotions seem natural. Everything connected to appearance and especially if you can socialize at home. Laugh! It's said enjoy good times.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21). This is a fantastic day for getting things done. Be sure to ask others you'll certainly enjoy more people time with. Be careful about what you say to someone. Be sure to ask others you'll certainly enjoy more people time with. Be careful about what you say to someone. Be sure to ask others you'll certainly enjoy more people time with. Be careful about what you say to someone.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21). Don't let others get you down. Be sure to ask others you'll certainly enjoy more people time with. Be careful about what you say to someone. Be sure to ask others you'll certainly enjoy more people time with. Be careful about what you say to someone.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19). Romance with business partners, teachers and authority figures is favored today. Be sure to ask others you'll certainly enjoy more people time with. Be careful about what you say to someone. Be sure to ask others you'll certainly enjoy more people time with. Be careful about what you say to someone.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18). Be sure to ask others you'll certainly enjoy more people time with. Be careful about what you say to someone. Be sure to ask others you'll certainly enjoy more people time with. Be careful about what you say to someone.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20). Don't give away the store today. If you're feeling generous, do it with others. People tend to be envious today.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

	4		6	8			1	
5	2							7
			5					
1		3		2				
2			3	7	9			8
				4		7		2
					3			
6							9	3
	5			9	1		2	

Difficulty Level ★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
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Answer to previous puzzle

3	9	2	5	6	1	8	7	4
1	5	4	7	8	2	9	3	6
6	8	7	4	9	3	5	2	1
9	1	3	8	4	5	6	2	7
7	4	5	1	2	6	3	8	9
8	2	6	9	3	7	4	1	5
4	6	8	3	1	9	7	5	2
2	7	1	6	5	4	1	9	3
5	3	1	2	7	8	1	6	8

Petula Clark, Tony Orlando, Ogie at Big Dome this month

SHOW TIME

UPCOMING MAJOR GIGS, ALL AT THE Araneta Coliseum: Petula Clark (Sept. 13), Tony Orlando (Sept. 14); Ayo Hiking boxing (Sept. 20); and Dyan Menold (Sept. 27). CATHY L. ESTEL

PETULA Clark

Ikhyworms mall tour

The Ikhyworms' upcoming mall tour to promote its "Self-Titled" album goes to SM San Lazaro on Sept. 14; SM Manila on Sept. 19; SM Mandaue on Sept. 20; SM Sta. Rosa on Sept. 21; SM South-mall on Sept. 26; SM Dasmariñas on Oct. 11; SM Bacoor on Oct. 12; and SM Lipa on Oct. 19.

Sabado Boys' 'Nitocut'

The Sabado Boys — Jimmy Bondoc, Gabe Mejares, Mike Chan, Myke Salvosa, Paulo Ramos and Yap Ramos — perform in "Nitocut," a two-night concert series on Sept. 19 and 26 at the Music Museum. Call 929-0366 and 929-8006.

'Ridiculous' . . .

From page B1

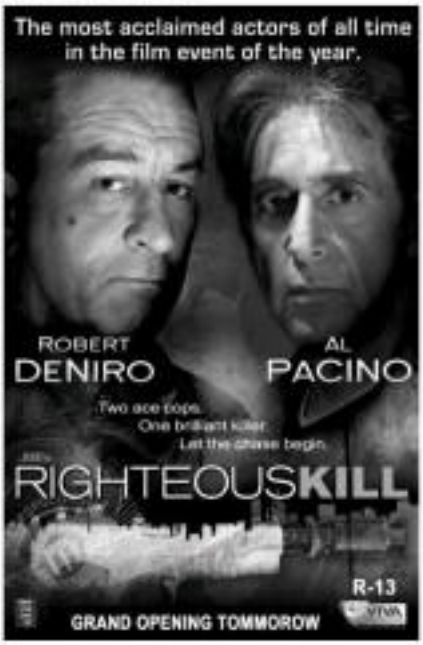
Keep My Heart Out of Sight" and for-mer Eric Annis/Hipnosis Bone Adam's meandering rendition of "When I Fell in Love"), there are amusing moments as well. These include Princess Hayat Edward Hagedorn's unflinching up-pounds in a country tune, "The Gun-Shot"; McDonald's Hub owner George King's confidence in the operatic "Mar-shmallow"; and Rep. Ed Panlilio's bizarre-tempo cover of "The Way You Look Tonight."

Barde, himself a former senator and still a broadcaster, is in fine vocal form as he croons a Broadway tune, "Nuno-sauvetus," and the theme from "Love Story."

Not to be outdone is Harry Siazon's cool interpretation of "Where or When," Angelique Lazo, Liza Gonzaga, Joey Lina and Joji Alidar spring their own surprises.

But the concert's highlight is a classic performance of "Ain't Polowog Alinda-lang" by the 12-member Golden Eagles Singers — whose senior citizens' group, the Golden Eagles Society, is the beneficiary of the CD's proceeds.

As semi-former's hero, this is as close as one is ever likely to get to the lyrical beauty of ce-rain notes, leading us to believe that, in the end, what matters is really the song, not just the singer.



POWER PLANT CINEMAS

DARK KNIGHT – PG13	BABYLON A.D. – R13	FOR THE FIRST TIME – PG13
BIG STAN – R13 / DEATH RACE – R13	MAMMA MIA – PG13	BABYLON A.D. – R13

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

THEATRE MALL

PROMENADE

RP duo in 2nd spot on 'Amazing Race Asia'

By Marinel R. Cruz

YOUR INDEPENDENT CRUSH SUPERSTAR and Tisha Sitang landed the No. 2 spot on the first day of a month-long competition for the reality program, "The Amazing Race Asia Season 3," Inquirer Entertainment learned.

During the "Yaru!" exclusive screening at the Japanese embassy in Makati City, we took a peek into what transpired in the day-long race that began in Bangkok and culminated in Chiang Mai in Thailand. Oliver Paters, 26, and Mai Xerxes, 24, representatives of the host country, placed first.

On the first race day all 11 teams were made to eat bugs, pound on the ground with their butts. Most of these on the action-adventure-themed ADD's on Sept. 11 at 9 p.m.

The teams — two pairs each from Thailand, Malaysia and India, and one pair each from the Philippines, Singapore, Korea and Hong Kong — race to win $100,000.

In a statement sent to Inquirer Entertainment, ABS dubbed the new season as "The toughest race ever." Fatigue level runs as high, the statement said, that one production crew member was hospitalized. The race is said to be

> They have big shoes to fill, since the country's bets last season finished third

faster in pace, with shorter breaks, compared to the first two seasons.

Geoff, 26, and Tisha, 22, have been dating for three-and-a-half years. "Nobody would have thought that we'd end up dating. We have very different personalities," said Tisha.

The couple said they have huge shoes to fill, since TV host Marc Nelson and Kordilyn Weinreider, ex-MP representatives last season, finished third.

Representing Hong Kong this season are beer buddies Sam Pey, 32, university lecturer and Vince Chong, 32, comedian and host.

Eye candy

Also from Thailand are Miss Universe 2005 Natalie Glebova, 26, and Hello Bangkok.com's co-founder, 25, Miss Earth Thailand 2006. They are the "resident eye candy," the ABS statement said. Last year, Natalie married Thailand's highest ranked tennis player, Danuleon Srichaphan, and Pedro was one of her bridesmaids. "We love to try new things," said Natalie. "Give us bungee jumping, parachuting, paragliding and jaw-rolling any day. We are competitive, we're in shape and we're going to kick ass."

Country Meets, 26, and Amit Hui, 24, from India said they are "poles apart in everything but always manage to get along." Amit, a real estate consultant, credits his cousin Nevaa, a commercial model, for getting him hooked on "Yaru."

The father-and-son-crossed Chew Aamri, an

Geoff Rodriguez and Tisha Sitang

ist, 53 and Kapil Ansal, HR executive, 25, is host India, too. Kapil said joining the race was a chance to host some quality time with his father.

ABS has brought in Asian stewers reality programs like "Survivor," "Star Factor" and "The Contender." With a total household reach of over 83 million across Asia (including 40 million in two-block basis in China), "The Amazing Race" has become its signature series.

RARE PHOTO OF

HEG Ryan, right, and Annora Basing star in "The Women," a remake of George Cukor's 1939 film of the same title, about a wealthy New Yorker who leaves her philandering husband and bonds with other women at a resort. The movie also stars Eva Mendes, Debra Messing, Jada Pinkett Smith, Bette Midler, Candice Bergen, Carrie Fisher, Cloris Leachman and Debi Mazar. At left, Ryan and Basing were recently honored in the 2008 Crystal and Lucy Awards (Women in Film) in Beverly Hills, for their contribution to the entertainment industry. AP/PMA

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